THE
POSTHUMOUS WORKS
OF
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Conſiſting of

SERMONS, LETTERS, ESSAYS, *&c.*

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SERMON

SERMON I.

The Duty of Charity ſtated and enforced.

PROV. III. 27.

With-hold not Good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the Power of thine Hands to do it.

SERM. I.

TO diſcourſe upon any Duty in General, without applying to Particulars; is little more than idle Declamation and empty Flouriſh: it is to let our Arrows fly at Random, when we ſhould direct them to a certain Mark. That Charity in general is a Duty, No-body will deny: but there are Many, who, on the Account of particular Circumſtances, think themſelves entirely diſcharged from the Performance of it: Many, who, though they own the Obligation, yet diſown it in it's due Degrees. Suffer me then to conſider,

Iſt, Who are the Perſons obliged to *Give* to charitable Uſes, and in what Proportion.

SERM. I. IIdly, Who are the Perſons qualified to *Receive* our Charity,

IIIdly, The *Manner* in which we ought to beſtow our Charity. And,

Laſtly, To lay before you the Motives to this Duty.

Charity, in the moſt comprehenſive Senſe of the Word, takes in a large Compaſs: it extends itſelf to an hearty Deſire and Endeavour to do all poſſible Good by our Heads as well as our Hands; by our Words as well as Works: by inſtructing the Ignorant, adviſing the Miſtaken, reclaiming the Wicked, comforting the Afflicted, encouraging the Virtuous and Worthy, *&c.* Charity even takes in Piety. For, not to mention that Piety, or a Regard to the Deity, is the Foundation of Charity, or Love to our Fellow-Creatures; exemplary Piety is one conſiderable Inſtance of doing Good: It is *letting our Light ſhine before Men*, in order to promote that Reverence to the Deity, which is the Baſis of all Virtue.

No Man, of whatever Order or Condition in Life, can think himſelf unconcerned in the Duty of Charity conſidered in this View; and though this be not the principal Point under our preſent Conſideration, yet it may help to direct us in that which is ſo, and is our firſt Enquiry; namely,

Iſt,

1ſt, Who are the Perſons within the Obligations of this Duty, as reſtrained to the Relief of the *Helpleſs*, the *Sick* and the *Needy*, &c. SERM. I.

One would think we ſhould need few Arguments to perſuade the Great, the Opulent, and the Able, to preſent themſelves the foremoſt in this Rank, and to undertake the principal Share in this Duty. They are Stewards, it is true, and muſt give an Account: but happy ſure is the Steward when his Truſt is of ſuch a Nature, that the more freely he diſpenſes, the more faithful he ſhall be accounted: When the Merit of his Liberality ſhall be placed, not to his *Maſter*'s, but to his *own* Account: When the Prayers of the *Poor* ſhall draw down upon him the Praiſe and Reward of his *Lord*.

This too is a Virtue whereof one would hope They would be inclined to ſhew themſelves more eminent Patterns; becauſe as their Station fits them peculiarly for it, ſo it denies them the Occaſions of practiſing many Virtues of another Sort. They meet with few Affronts, or Injuries, or Oppreſſions to employ the Virtue of Meekneſs, Forgiveneſs and Patience: They experience but little of hard Fortune, leſs of hard Labour, and nothing at all of the Diſtreſſes of Poverty, Hunger, and Cold, and Nakedneſs, to call forth the Virtues of Patience and Reſignation, and an humble Reliance on Providence.

Now what more proper Method of ſupplying the *Abſence of theſe Virtues* in themſelves than by extending their Charity to thoſe very Perſons who do practiſe them, —— by letting *Their* Bounty render the Practice of them ſomewhat more eaſy —— by allowing

SERM. I. lowing themſelves to become in ſome Meaſure, the Inſtruments in God's Hand of rewarding them?

Their Good Deeds then ought to bear Proportion to their Abilities. GOD, who is the Fountain-Head of every good Gift, has made them the Channels whereby he intends to convey His Bleſſings to Mankind. Their Charity may begin at Home; but after the Stream of it has watered their own Garden, they ought not to confine it there; but to let it flow abroad to enrich the neighbouring Soil, and to diſpenſe Plenty and Fruitfulneſs all around.

This is ſo agreeable to the common Notions of Mankind, that Every-Body condemns the mean and ſordid Spirit of that Wretch; who, though God has bleſſed Him with Abundance, and conſequently with a Power of bleſſing others, is yet relentleſs to the Cries of thoſe who have nothing to plead for them but, what is the moſt powerful Pleader with every generous Mind, extreme Miſery: and have nothing to return but their Prayers; Prayers, poured forth from the Fulneſs of a grateful Heart. They look with Abhorrence upon a Man, who is ever amaſſing Riches without laying any Thing out in Charitable Uſes; as greedy as the Sea, and as barren as the Shore.

Numbers, it is true, think they have done enough in declaiming againſt the Practice of ſuch Perſons: for upon the Great and Opulent they think the whole Burden of this Duty ought to reſt: but for *Themſelves*, they being of ſomewhat a *lower Claſs*, they deſire to be excuſed. Their Circumſtances, they ſay, are but juſt eaſy; juſt ſufficient to anſwer the Demands of their Families, and their own neceſſary Expences;

Expences; and therefore they plead utter Inability, and expect to be totally exempted from the Performance of this Duty. But, before this Excuſe will be of any Avail, it behoves them to conſider; whether they do not indulge themſelves in Expences unſuitable to their Rank and Condition; ſuch as Luxury, Gaming, or other prodigal Diverſions. If this be the Caſe, it is no ſlight Matter to waſte that Fortune in Idleneſs and Riot, which ſhould make them *Feet to the Lame, and Eyes to the Blind*; as a *Father to the Orphan*, and as an *Huſband to the Widow*. It is no ſlight Matter to ſquander away *That* which, if rightly uſed, would purchaſe for them the moſt valuable Treaſures; Treaſures in Heaven: but, if abuſed in unneceſſary Expences or ſinful Intemperance, lays a Weight upon the Soul, which will make them as dead to all Sentiments of Piety, as they are to thoſe of Charity. SERM. I.

Competency will be a Word of much too large a Signification, if we are to underſtand it by *Supplies* for coſtly Eating and Drinking; *Supplies* for high Enjoyment of Life; for Retinue and Equipage. Imaginary Wants are boundleſs, and Charity muſt never begin, if it is poſtponed till theſe have an End.

He, it is true, is *worſe than an Infidel*, who does not *provide for his Family*: but it is as true, that our Family ought not to engroſs all our Subſtance excluſively of the Poor, who have a Right; even God's Right. For ſome Part of what we have is *due* to God, as an Acknowledgment that we derive from Him the Whole: and God has made the Poor his Subſtitutes.

I know

SERM. I. I know not whether ſeveral of the inferior Sort may not have taken up a Notion, that They have nothing to do in the Works of Charity: a Notion very falſe, and withal very dangerous. Rich and Poor are equally concerned in the Duty, but in Proportion to their Circumſtances. And he that has *Little* is as ſtrictly bound to give ſomething out of that *Little*, as he that has more is obliged to give more. According to that of *Tobit*: *If thou haſt Abundance, give Alms accordingly; if thou haſt but Little, be not afraid to give according to that Little; for thou layeſt up a good Treaſure for thyſelf againſt the Day of Neceſſity.* As the Rich are obliged to relieve the Poor, ſo even the Poor are alſo bound, in Proportion to their Circumſtances, to help one another. What an Advantage was it to the *poor Widow*, that She, by bringing her *Mite* only *into the Treaſury*, could thereby exerciſe a nobler Charity than the greateſt of all there had done! Have the Poor Little to give? Charity does not conſiſt in Much or Little, but in doing the beſt we can, and doing it with a *willing Mind*. The ſmalleſt Preſent imaginable may be the greateſt Bounty. And if, by the Smallneſs of it, it prove but of little Benefit to the Receiver, yet it may be of ineſtimable Uſe and Benefit to the Giver. And if a Day-Labourer, for Inſtance, contributes a Day's Work, ſuch a Charity may weigh more, than large Sums from others, and be in the Sight of God *of great Price*. Even the inferior Sort ſometimes give into Expences that are not ſtrictly neceſſary, from which therefore they may and ought to retrench ſomewhat to beſtow on thoſe who want even Neceſſaries.

The

SERM. I.

The only Perſons then that ſeem to have a fair Right of pleading an entire Exemption from this Duty are Thoſe whoſe Circumſtances are deeply involved: for till we can ſatisfy our Creditors we ought not to relieve the Poor. We muſt be *juſt* before we can be *charitable*. It would be unjuſt to give away what is not our own; and nothing is properly our own but what remains after our juſt Debts are cancelled. *Owe no Man any Thing*, ſays St. *Paul*, *but to love one another*; when we owe no Man any Thing in the *legal Senſe* but what we can pay, then we muſt anſwer the other great Debt, as much a Debt in the Eye of Reaſon——the *Loving one another*, expreſſed in proper Inſtances of Kindneſs and Benevolence.

What has been the greateſt Bar to the Exerciſe of this Virtue is, the Difficulty of pitching upon any fixed and ſtated Proportion, ſhort of which our Charity ought not to fall: and where the determinate Meaſure of Duty is not or cannot be aſſigned, there Men's Intereſt or Covetouſneſs will be ever ſuggeſting Excuſes for the Non-Performance of it. We ought to adjuſt our Bounty to our Abilities; but as there is no fixed Standard, we ſeem willing to take Advantage of that Circumſtance, and to meaſure our Abilities by our Inclination.

In Order to remove this Impediment, if we are not more diſpoſed to deceive than to direct our Conſciences, we ought to follow the Rule laid down in all doubtful Caſes, *i. e.* to chuſe the Part which is leaſt dangerous. As in the Gratifications then of Eating and Drinking, we ſhould rather take too little than too much of our Liberty, for Fear of being betrayed into Intemperance; ſo in the Exerciſe

of

SERM. I. of Charity, we ſhould rather exceed than fall ſhort, for Fear of incurring the Guilt of Uncharitableneſs.

Again, the Apoſtle, giving the *Corinthians* Directions, orders; *That every Man ſhould lay by in Store as God had proſpered him*: that is, according to his Income, Increaſe or Revenue. Here then it may be of Uſe to ſhew, that the *Jews* were, by the expreſs Command of God, obliged to appropriate the tenth Part of their Revenue every three Years to Charitable Uſes. Thus we read in *Deuteronomy* xiv. 28. *At the End of three Years thou ſhalt bring forth all the Tithe* (or Tenth) *of thine Increaſe that ſame Year, and ſhalt lay it up within thy Gates: And the Stranger, the Fatherleſs and the Widow which are within thy Gates, ſhall come and eat, and be ſatisfied; that the Lord thy God may bleſs Thee in all the Work of thine Hand which thou doeſt.*

Now the tenth Part of their Income every three Years is the thirtieth Part of their Yearly Revenue: If then the *Jews*, under a Diſpenſation which laid leſs Streſs upon Charity, were bound, beſides their ordinary and occaſional Charities, to ſet aſide the thirtieth Part of their Increaſe for the Poor: certainly we, who are bleſſed with a Religion where Charity ſhines with the moſt diſtinguiſhed Luſtre; we, whoſe *Righteouſneſs* ought to *exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees*, ſhould not at any Time fall ſhort of this Meaſure, how much ſoever our Generoſity may prompt us ſometimes to go beyond it.

But farther, it ought to be remembered that one or two occaſional Acts of Charity are not ſufficient to denominate

denominate a Man *Charitable*. He alone is a Charitable Man whoſe Diſpoſition is always inclined to Charity: who is at all Times glad to relieve Diſtreſs when he can, and ſorry when he cannot, whoſe Bounty reaches as far as his Power extends, whoſe Benevolence takes *all* the Objects of Charity, and whoſe Diſcretion ſingles out the *moſt proper*: which brings me, SERM. I.

II. In the Second Place to conſider Who are the Perſons qualified to *Receive* our Charity. And,

1ſt, We ought rather to ſuccour the *Diſtreſſed*, than encreaſe the Happineſs of the *Eaſy*: becauſe we are to do the moſt Good that we can. In the latter Caſe, it is like giving Wine to a Man that hath already quenched his Thirſt; in the former, it is like giving a Cordial to a Perſon fainting. According to that of *Eccleſiaſticus*; *Mercy is ſeaſonable in Time of Affliction, like Clouds of Rain in Time of Drought*. It is ſending a gracious Rain, and refreſhing what is weary and parched up. Even the *Bad*, much more the *Good*, are to be relieved in Caſes of extreme Neceſſity. It is a Miſtake to imagine that Hatred to Sin ſhould make us uncompaſſionate to Sinners in Extremity. To convince us of this we need only reflect, that if the Son of God had regarded Sinners with the ſame unpitying Eye, Mankind had never been redeemed. Had God hated Sinners after this Manner, the World itſelf had long ago been annihilated. No: if ſuffering *Innocence* only gave a Title to Compaſſion, the Sun had never roſe on the Unjuſt; no, never perhaps on Thee, who denieſt that Mercy to ſuffering Vice, which

SERM. I. which Thou doſt expect from God. Our Pity, the univerſal Language of Nature, calls loudly upon us to relieve both the Good and the Bad, who are juſt ready to periſh. Thoſe then are the moſt proper Objects of Relief, who are incapable of relieving themſelves. But,

2*dly*, The beſt Charity we can give to the *Poor* that have Ability and Strength, is to employ them in *Work* that they may not contract an Habit of Idleneſs; and ſo the Public not only loſe the Advantage of their Service, but likewiſe become chargeable with an uſeleſs Incumbrance.

But yet, if *ſuch* be not able to earn a competent Livelihood; if the Produce of their Labour be not proportionable to the Demands of a numerous Family; then ſtill they are proper Objects of our Charity. Nor can there well be a more pitiable Caſe than that of thoſe whoſe daily Drudgery, after the utmoſt they can do, will not procure daily Bread for themſelves and their Houſhold. To conſider a Parent, who has toiled out the live-long Day in Hardſhip, who yet at Night, inſtead of finding Reſt, ſhall find a Pain more inſupportable than all his Fatigues abroad —— the Cravings of a ſmall helpleſs Family which he cannot ſatisfy; this is enough to give the moſt lively Touches of Compaſſion to every Heart that is not paſt Feeling. Certainly when the Poor have done all they *can* for a Supply of their Neceſſities; the Rich do not do all they *ought*, if they do not make up, what is wanting, out of Their Abundance. If there be any Caſe more deplorable it is,

3*dly*,

3*dly*, That of *Theirs*, who, after having been accuſtomed to Eaſe and Plenty, are, by ſome unavoidable Reverſe of Fortune, by no Folly or Fault of their own, condemned to bear, what they are the leaſt able to bear, the galling Load of Poverty: who, after having been perhaps *Fathers to the Fatherleſs* in the Day of their Proſperity, are now become the *Objects* of that Charity they were wont ſo liberally to diſpenſe. Theſe Objects plead the more ſtrongly for our Relief, becauſe they are the leaſt able to reveal their Miſery, and make their Wants known. But, SERM. I.

4*thly*, *Fatherleſs Children* particularly demand our Care, to fence their tender Bloom of Years againſt the early Blaſts of Vice; to conduct them with a ſafe but gentle Hand through the dangerous Stages of Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. To give them at an Age, when their Minds are moſt ſuſceptible of *good* Impreſſions, and their Memories the moſt tenacious of *any* Impreſſions; to give them early Notices of Piety, to enable them to become uſeful Members of Society; who if turned a-drift and left defenceleſs would, without the extraordinary Grace of God, become ſo many Peſts and Nuiſances to it.

And is it not much more diſcreet and rational to apply our Charity to *ſuch* Objects, where there can be no Danger of Miſapplication, than to run the Riſque of miſplacing it upon *Vagrants* and *common Beggars?* who, for ought we know, may be Counterfeits; whoſe greateſt *Want* may be that of Virtue.

I would not however be miſunderſtood: When there are ſtrong Appearances and Symptoms, that

theſe

SERM. I. *theſe laſt* are in extreme Neceſſity, the good-natured and charitable Part is to be preferred. If it happen to be an Error, it is at the worſt an Error on the right Side.

5thly, Another Sort of Perſons that have a Right to our Charity are the *Sick*. *Solomon* hath obſerved long ago, that when *Heavineſs in the Heart of a Man maketh it ſtoop*, then *a* good Word *maketh it* peculiarly *glad*. Reflect therefore ſeriouſly and tenderly on the Condition of ſuch Perſons; for they ſometimes ſuffer a good deal from the mere *Inattention* of thoſe about them, who yet could not be brought on any Terms to do *deliberately*, what they apprehended to be cruel or unkind. Let us, in the Language of afflicted *Job*, (for afflicted Perſons know beſt how to ſpeak of Affliction) let us *put our Soul into their Soul's Stead*: let us patiently bear thoſe Inſtances of Peeviſhneſs and Fretfulneſs into which, under ſuch a Preſſure, they may be apt to fall; imputing them to their Diſtemper, and not to themſelves. In a Word, let us endavour to eaſe their Sufferings as heartily as if they were our own; and to bear our own as patiently and reſignedly as we generally do thoſe of others.

Some indeed of the tender and compaſſionate Make ſeem to feel ſo much for and with others, that one cannot help wiſhing they might feel as little as poſſible for themſelves. They are ſure at leaſt of ſuffering nothing *alone*. Every one that hath the leaſt Tincture of Humanity muſt ſuffer with them in Diſtreſs; *with* them, *from* whom they are ſure to ſuffer nothing; nothing by an unkind Word or Deed.

This

This Point, though well deſerving our Attention, is but ſeldom touched upon; for which Reaſon I have dwelt the longer upon it. SERM. I.

III. I now proceed to my third general Head, which was to conſider the *Manner* in which we are to diſpenſe our Charity.

Acts of Mercy, public and private, have both their peculiar and diſtinguiſhing Excellencies: neither are to be omitted. To ſay, that becauſe our Saviour has commanded us to give our Alms *privately*, therefore we are not to exerciſe any Acts of *public* Charity; would be as ridiculous as to argue, that becauſe private Prayer is commanded, public Worſhip is forbidden. To put our Virtue to the Teſt; to try whether it be genuine (as founded upon a pure unmixed Principle of pleaſing God without any ſiniſter Views of worldly Applauſe) our Saviour has ordered us to give Alms ſecretly; and our *Father* which *ſeeth in Heaven will reward us openly.* That Virtue, on the other Hand, might not loſe the Benefit of public Example, He has commanded that, at other Times, we *let our Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.* If all our Charity was to be intirely ſecret, removed from the Eye of the World; it would decay and dwindle into nothing. Juſt as Religion itſelf would, for want of a conſpicuous, exemplary, avowed Piety: Both the one and the other then ſtand in great Need of a public Countenance and Encouragement, which ſtamp a Credit upon them in the Midſt of a crooked and degenerate Age. If Charity, on the other Hand,

SERM. I. was to be done always publicly and openly: with Religion again it would degenerate into mere Hypocriſy, Formality, and outſide Shew. Wiſely therefore, very wiſely, has our Saviour (who has given us the moſt perfect Model of Religion) enjoined both the public and private Practice of this one great and eſſential Duty of it.

In the Exerciſe of public Charity, great Care is indeed to be taken, that we ſuffer not ourſelves to be influenced by Oſtentation, or any ſiniſter Motive. Even the Senſe of ſhewing a good Example, and the inward Riſings of Pity, ought to be backed, if they be not introduced, by the moſt noble and generous Motive of all, the diſcharging our Duty to God.

By the Way; what an exalted Turn of Mind muſt He have, who can be content to ſuſpend all Thoughts of Praiſe, till he receives it in that Place where his Actions cannot be miſrepreſented; who can put off the Deſire of Applauſe, till he receives *that* Applauſe of infinitely more Value, than the united Commendation of all Beings in the whole World beſides, that moſt invaluable Applauſe of his Creator —— *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord?*

But beſides the Circumſtance of *Place*, there is the *Manner* in the *Perſon* to be obſerved, which is ſometimes as engaging as the Bounty he beſtows. It is the leaſt Glory in a Perſon of Worth to be ſuperior to others in Point of Station and Fortune: his greateſt Honour is to make that Superiority ſit gracefully upon him, without any forbidding Appearances; and to make his Inferior as little ſenſible of it as poſſible

ſible by an eaſy Dignity, and by an affable Complacency of Behaviour. An Action good in itſelf is greatly recommended by an agreeable Manner of doing it: an agreeable Manner being to Actions, what a lively Manner of Expreſſion is to our Senſe; it beautifies and adorns it, and gives it all the Advantage whereof it is capable. There is the ſame Difference between a beneficial Deed, when endeared by an eaſy, affable Deportment, and when deſtitute of that Circumſtance, as between a beautiful Object when enlivened by the chearful Light of the Sun, and when exhibited in a dim, ſickly Light. In a Word, it is our Duty in general not only to have Virtue, but to make our Virtue truly amiable. A Gift may be great in itſelf, but if it is diſpenſed with ſeveral ungracious Circumſtances, in an over-bearing Way, or without the Appearance of a willing Mind, it is like an ungainly Building, admirable only for it's Magnitude; which does not affect or ſtrike us Half ſo much as one of ſmaller Dimenſions adjuſted with Symmetry and Harmony of Parts, and ſet off with the additional Beauty of decent Ornaments. SERM. I.

A Delicacy of this Kind is moſt chiefly to be obſerved with thoſe who have *not been uſed* to receive Charity: where *we* ſhould endeavour as much to conceal our Benevolence, as *they* do to hide their Miſery: intimating herein the Behaviour of an Heathen Philoſopher, who contrived his Bounty to be conveyed in ſo indirect a Manner, that Chance rather than Deſign ſeemed to have had the Diſpoſal of it. But this leads me,

SERM. I.

IV*thly*, and *Laſtly*, To lay before you the *Motives* to Charity; and,

1. The firſt may be drawn from *Compaſſion*.

Compaſſion is the Call of our *Father which is in Heaven*, to us His Children who are in Proſperity, to put us upon relieving our Brethren who are in Diſtreſs. This is an Affection wiſely interwoven in our Frame and Nature by the Author of all Nature: that whereas dry and abſtracted Reaſon is too ſedentary and remiſs a Counſellor, we might have a more inſtant and vigorous Pleader in our Breaſts to excite us to Acts of Charity. As far indeed as it is ingrafted in us, it is mere *Inſtinct*; but when we cultivate and cheriſh it till we *love Mercy*; when we dwell upon each tender Sentiment that opens to our Mind, and enlarges our Heart; then it becomes a *Virtue*. Every one, who has not eraſed all Sentiments of Humanity, muſt be intimately conſcious (the very higheſt Degree of Certainty) that he has *ſuch* a Principle: And it is a material Obſervation, which may ſtill give us a deeper Senſe of the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God in framing our Nature, that we are more paſſionately and feelingly affected to behold the extreme *Anguiſh* of a Perſon that is even a Stranger to us, than we are to ſee the *Happineſs* of one that is indifferent to us. We are more apt in *this* Caſe *to weep with them that weep*, than we are in the other *to rejoice with them that do rejoice*. Now the Reaſon, why God has given us more quick and vigorous Touches of Compaſſion in the one Caſe, than of Joy in the other, is plainly this; it is more in our Power to relieve Diſtreſs, than it is to promote

promote Happineſs. When a Perſon has had ſome conſiderable Succeſs, our hearty Congratulation is in a great Meaſure, if not altogether, uſeleſs and unavailing; he has already gained his Point, and *our* Joy will add little or nothing to *his*. But when we ſee a Perſon in Diſtreſs, a quick and pungent Senſe of his Pains is of great Uſe to him: it prompts us immediately to relieve him, or to ſollicit his Relief; and, in relieving him, we in ſome Senſe relieve ourſelves. Reaſon, however noble a Principle, is like Old-Age; too ſlow, languid and unreſolving: But the Paſſions, like Youth, when they are heartily intereſted, ſet every Engine at Work; and leave nothing unattempted to compaſs their Ends. Whoever then thou art, whoſe Heart is hardened and waxed groſs, put thyſelf in the Room of ſome poor unfriended Wretch, beſet perhaps with a large Family; broken with Miſeries, and pining with Poverty; his Mind as it were bleeding inwards, while ſilent Grief, like a Worm at the Core, preys upon his Vitals: in ſuch a Caſe what wouldeſt Thou think it reaſonable thy rich Neighbours ſhould do? —— that they, like the *Prieſt* and *Levite* in the Goſpel, ſhould look on Thee with an Eye of Indifference, and then *paſs by on the other Side* regardleſs? —— or that, like the good *Samaritan*, they ſhould *pour* Balm into thy wounded Spirit? —— Be thyſelf the Judge, and whatever thou ſhalt think reaſonable thy Neighbours ſhould *do* unto Thee, in ſuch a Situation; *go* now, and *do likewiſe* unto them. Make the Caſe of the Poor your own, and then conſider how much you would, or might with Reaſon, *expect* from the Rich and Eaſy, and then *give* accordingly.

SERM. I.

SERM. I.

2. The ſecond *Motive* is the Pleaſure of *Benevolence.*

The Reaſon and Foundation of Charity, the principal End and Deſign of Alms-giving, look not more at the Relief of the Indigent, than at the training Men up to mutual Love and Good-will, in order to qualify them for Heaven. Mean and illiberal is the Man, whoſe Soul the Good of himſelf can intirely fill and ingroſs. True Benevolence, extenſive as the Light of the Sun, takes in all Mankind. It is not indeed in your Power to ſupport all the Incurable and Aged; it is not in your Power to train up in the Paths of Virtue ſeveral helpleſs, friendleſs, fatherleſs Children. But if, as far as the Compaſs of your Power reaches, nothing is hid from the Heat of your Bounty, and, where your Power falls ſhort, you are cordially affected to ſee the Work done by others, or heartily ſorry to ſee it is not done: thoſe Charities which you could not do, nay which were never done, will be placed to your Account. To graſp thus the whole Syſtem of Reaſonable Beings with an overflowing Love is to be —— what ſhall I call it?—— it is to be almoſt infinitely good —— it is at leaſt to make as near Approaches as poſſible to infinite Goodneſs. And can there be any Thing more tranſporting than to poſſeſs this humane, this God-like Quality? Yes, the Pleaſure riſes higher, if our Abilities be great, as well as our Inclination. What can affect a generous Soul more, than to make Miſery and Woe vaniſh before him, like Darkneſs before the Light; to raiſe a Heart that was ſinking beneath the Weight of Grief? To brighten up that Countenance, which was over-caſt with Sorrow,

Sorrow, into Joy and Gladneſs? To revive with refreſhing Showers of Love and Kindneſs that *barren and dry Land where no Water was?* How muſt his Heart *burn within him* while his Hands are thus ſtretched out! Believe me, it is but a well-judged, more refined, and better Taſte for Pleaſure, to lay out, in *undoing the heavy Burden* of our Fellow Creatures, *that* Money which all of us, more or leſs, expend in innocent but uſeleſs Gratifications; and too many of us, it may be, in criminal Pleaſures. And who would not deny himſelf the ſhort-lived Indulgence of ſome Appetite, ſome trifling and gay Diverſion, rather than ſee his Brother pinched with Neceſſity, and ſtarving with Want? Deny himſelf, did I ſay? No; *He* denies himſelf the moſt, who refuſes to purchaſe ſo many laſting, and unallayed Pleaſures at ſo eaſy a Rate. SERM. I.

We are affected with delightful Senſations when we ſee even the *inanimate* Parts of the Creation, thoſe Meadows, thoſe Trees and thoſe Flowers in a flouriſhing State. There muſt be ſome deep and rooted Melancholy at the Heart, when all Nature appears ſmiling and chearful about us in it's moſt advantageous Dreſs, if we are not inclined to correſpond with the Reſt of the Creation, and join in the univerſal Chorus of Joy. But if Meadows and Trees in their Verdure, if Flowers in their Bloom, and all the *vegetable* Parts of Nature in Chearfulneſs *at this Seaſon*, can inſpire Gladneſs into the Heart, and drive away all Sadneſs and Deſpair; to ſee the *rational* Parts of the Creation flouriſhing, ought to give us a Pleaſure as much ſuperior, as the latter are above the former in the Scale of Beings. But

SERM. I. ſtill the Pleaſure is greater, if we have been inſtrumental in contributing to their Happineſs; if we have watered theſe Plants with our Bounty, and fenced them from the Inclemencies of the Seaſons.

He that centers all his Regard upon himſelf, excluſively of others, has placed his Affections very odly; he has placed them on the moſt worthleſs Object in the World——himſelf. He that has ſhut his Hands, and ſteeled his Heart, againſt all Impreſſions of Compaſſion, is a moſt inſignificant Blank in the Creation. He may have Senſe enough to *get* and *keep* his Fortune; but he has too little Spirit truly to *reliſh* and *enjoy it*, by communicating it to others. For Joy, like Light, grows greater by being communicated: and that Happineſs, which is ſolitary, is but Happineſs by Halves. And if, as our Saviour ſays, *it is more bleſſed to give than to receive*, then you are to look upon *him* who aſks and deſerves your Charity, as your greateſt Benefactor. He that brings you an Opportunity of doing Good, ſubſtantial Good, in Effect *obliges* you; he brings you what is far more valuable, and more valued by every good Man, than the Gold and Silver which you part with to him. To be *rich in good Works* is the moſt laſting Riches.

But this brings me to the laſt *Motive* which at preſent I ſhall ſuggeſt for our Charity, which is,

3. Thirdly, The Recompence of the *Reward*.

We are all, Rich and Poor, travelling to one Country; and we ſhould not ſcruple to accommodate our indigent Fellow-Travellers with Neceſſaries on the Road, when we are ſure of being repaid at our Journey's End with an immenſe Reward. And

remember

remember that at the laſt Day, the great Queſtion will not be, whether you have been *negatively* good, whether you have done no Harm? but, what Good you have done? What *Hungry ye have fed?* What *Sick ye have viſited?* The *Rich-Man* in the Goſpel is not charged with injuring any Perſon, or defrauding his Neighbour. The only Fault recorded is, that he *fared ſumptuouſly every Day*, while *Lazarus lay at his Gate* periſhing for Want of common Neceſſaries. He was one of that Set of Men, a numerous Set, who are very hoſpitable to thoſe that do not want, and very unfriendly to thoſe that do. SERM. I.

This then was his Crime; and yet the next Report that we have of him is; that *in Hell he lift up his Eyes being in Torments.* A melancholy and ſhocking Conſideration to thoſe *who have this World's Goods, and yet ſhut up their Bowels of Compaſſion* againſt their Brethren in Diſtreſs.

Our Saviour has made the Poor his Repreſentatives: —— *Inaſmuch as ye have done it to the leaſt of my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.* And *Solomon* ſays, *He that giveth unto the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord.* Charity is then a Treaſure transferred to Heaven. It beſtows on the Receiver the Comforts of this Life; and on the Giver the Glories of another.

It is the laſt Thing I ſhould believe, that the Man who acted by a Principle of Obedience to his Maker, has cheriſhed each generous and liberal Movement of the Soul, with an Head ever-ſtudious to contrive, an Heart ever-willing to promote, and Hands ever-active to diſtribute to, the Good of his Fellow-Creatures, ſhould notwithſtanding be doomed to be an

Aſſociate

SERM. I. Associate for ever of those accursed Spirits, in a Place where Benevolence never sheds it's kindly Beams: But Malice and Anguish, and Blackness of Darkness reign for evermore.

No: the Riches that we have given away will remain with us for ever. *Charity never faileth* —— the same Habit of Love which we have begot and confirmed by many repeated Acts of Kindness will accompany us into another World. When we have *shewn Mercy* to our Fellow-Creatures we may safely expect *it* from our Creator.

To whom, &c.

SERMON

SERMON II.

The Chriſtian Life a progreſſive State.

PROV. IV. 18.

The Path of the Juſt is as the ſhining Light; ſhining more and more unto the perfect Day.

SERM. II.

A Great many, and ſome too who call themſelves Philoſophers (who, by the Way, never underſtood the true End of Living) have repreſented Human Life, as a dull Buſineſs not worth a Man's Care; where the ſame Things come over and over again, *like a Tale that is told:* Which, however entertaining it may appear while it is new; yet, by frequent Repetitions, at laſt becomes perfectly tedious and inſipid. The Conſequence of which has been, that many, viewing the Picture in this diſagreeable Light, have been inclined to throw off all Concern about it; any farther than to arrive at a ſecure Indolence of Body, and a peaceful Tranquillity, or rather Inſenſibility of Mind; to ſhut out all Reflection any farther than juſt to remedy or remove ſuch Inconveniencies, as the common Accidents of Life may occaſionally produce: And others, loathing the ſame Viands ſo often ſerved up, or fretted and ſoured by the many Croſſes and Calamities intailed

SERM. II. tailed upon this imperfect State, have, as ridiculouſly as raſhly, put an End to their Being.

And true it is, that the Lives of too many have been but one barren Circle, to which they have been as it were inchanted, going round and round continually, ever in Motion, but never ridding any Ground. But though many may have *made* Life a dull Round of inſignificant Actions, yet no Man had ever *Occaſion* to make it ſo. It is ſo indeed to Brutes, which ſoon arrive at that Pitch of Perfection which is allotted to their Nature: where they muſt ſtop ſhort, without a Poſſibility of going any farther. *Senſe*, which is the higheſt natural Power they have, moves in a narrow Sphere; it's Objects in Compariſon few; and moreover dull and groſs: And therefore not only come more quickly round, but become more languid and dull in every Revolution. But Man is endued with nobler Faculties, and preſented with nobler Objects whereon to exerciſe and employ them. The Contemplation of all moral and divine Truths to engage his Underſtanding: The Love of the Creator, and all the Beauties of the natural and moral World to attract and captivate his Affections: The Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of God manifeſt in the whole Extent of the Creation, to exalt his Admiration, and call forth all his Praiſe. The Opportunities of all good Actions to produce the Pleaſures of Virtue and a good Conſcience. Nothing can bound the noble Range of Reaſon, ever improving, and ever improvable; nothing can abate the Ardor of the Affections, which are placed upon the Fountain and Foundation of all Love, of all Beauty and Harmony: Nothing can diminiſh the Admiration

Admiration of an Univerſe, where the very minuteſt Parts are above the higheſt human Comprehenſion: Nothing can deaden the Pleaſures of Virtue and a good Conſcience, which, the more they are taſted, the more they are deſirable. Here is a noble Path for a rational Creature to travel in: His continued Advancement in it, his daily Improvement in Knowledge, Virtue and Goodneſs will conſtitute his higheſt Perfection here, and terminate in a perfect Conſummation of endleſs Bliſs and Glory: *The Path of the Juſt is as the ſhining Light; ſhining more and more unto the perfect Day.* From which Words I ſhall take Occaſion to ſhew, SERM. II.

I*ſt*, That it is in every Man's Power to make his Life a progreſſive State.

II*dly*, Offer ſome Reaſons and Conſiderations to engage us in ſuch a Practice; and,

Laſtly, Conclude with ſome Reflections relative to the Subject.

And, *Firſt*, it is in every Man's Power to make his Life a progreſſive State. If we trace the Progreſs of the human Mind from the firſt Dawnings of Senſe and Reaſon, we may ſee from what ſmall Beginnings it acquires a prodigious Store of intellectual Knowledge. The View fills us with Admiration, and we are naturally led to wiſh, nay, to make it the Sum of our Wiſhes, that we could be able to traverſe thoſe Regions of Science, whereof ſome noble Genius's have made themſelves Maſters; But though

we

SERM. II.

we admire, we need not complain. It has indeed pleaſed the All-wiſe Governor of the World to make a great Diſtinction in the original Frame of human Souls, with Reſpect to the *intellectual* Powers: A Proviſion abſolutely neceſſary for anſwering the Purpoſes of civil Government, where a Subordination is neceſſarily implied; for ſo much Wiſdom will always produce ſo much Power. But whether we may always obſerve it or no, our Saviour's Command to his Diſciples is virtually fulfilled in every Community: *He that is the greateſt among you, let him be your Servant.* If the Men who are bleſſed with diſtinguiſhed Abilities, make a proper Uſe of them (and otherwiſe they need not be envied) they are really increaſing the Meaſure of the publick Good; and in that, doing Service to the meaneſt Individual: And therefore Reputation and Eſteem are but a due Acknowledgment for their good Offices. But to expect or deſire Honour from *Men* is but a low Ambition. Let us try to recommend ourſelves to the Approbation of him, whoſe *Judgment is not as Man's Judgment.* The very beſt Part of Knowledge is knowing how to diſcharge rightly our Duty to God; and therefore the Performance of that Duty muſt ſtill be of higher Eſtimation. And in this Mankind are more upon an equal footing. The moral Powers, like the natural Perfections of the Body, are more equally diſtributed; and in them there is as large a Field laid open for our Advancement towards Perfection, as there is in the Intellectual.

It is true, we may have unhappily ſtruck into a wrong Path, and be wandering in the Ways of Wickedneſs:

Wickedneſs: But, by a ſerious Recollection, and Application to Divine Mercy, we may yet find a *Lantern to our Feet, and a Light unto our Paths.* Our evil Habits, thoſe Cords that hold us in Captivity to Sin, though we may not be able at once to caſt them away from us, yet we may inſenſibly weaken, and at laſt break aſunder, by gradually unravelling the ſmaller Lines of their Contexture. Our Inclinations, that may have taken a wrong Bent, we may counteract, and by Degrees recover to their original Rectitude. Where our Nature favours a particular Virtue, there we may ſecond it, and graft upon it; under the Branches whereof other hopeful Seeds may take Root, ſpring up, and proſper. After this we may ſtill be looking into the Culture of the Soul, and ſtudying daily Improvements, by calling forth Virtues, or ſeveral Degrees of Virtue, that have not yet made their Appearances, by cheriſhing and bringing to Perfection thoſe that have. Thus will our Minds reſemble thoſe Fruit-Trees, in which, while ſeveral of the Productions are come to Maturity, others are bloſſoming, and giving Promiſes of reaching the ſame Degrees of Excellence. SERM. II.

No Man knows what he can do, till he is firmly reſolved to do whatever he can. When Men have thought themſelves obliged to ſet about any Buſineſs in good Earneſt, they have done that which their Indolence made them ſuppoſe impoſſible. There are ſeveral Abilities unknown to the Poſſeſſors, which lie hid in the Mind for Want of an Occaſion to call them forth.

Inſtead of arming themſelves with holy Reſolutions, inſtead of ſummoning all the Courage that ought

SERM. II. ought to inſpire every faithful Soldier of Chriſt; how apt are Men to frighten and intimidate themſelves by imaginary Difficulties and Dangers? In their View of the heavenly *Canaan* they act as thoſe who went to ſpy out the earthly: They look upon themſelves to be no more than Graſhoppers, in Compariſon of the Enemies they are to encounter; and thereby check and controul that honeſt Ambition, which it is their ſpecial Intereſt to cheriſh, to animate and incite: The Ambition of ſtanding foremoſt in the Rank of good Men.

One can ſcarce have too high an Opinion of the Powers of the human Soul, eſpecially in the Affair of our Salvation; and ſcarce too low an Opinion of Men's Inclinations to exert thoſe Powers in that moſt important Caſe.

But farther, though God does not diſpenſe a Meaſure of Grace equal in itſelf to every Individual, becauſe ſome Men may have greater Difficulties from the Force of Conſtitution to ſtruggle with than others, or for other Reaſons unknown to us; yet he has diſpenſed to every one a Meaſure of Grace equal to the Duty he demands from him, equal to the Reward he intends for him. God hath given to no Man *irreſiſtible Grace*; for when he *had done all that could be done to his Vineyard, yet it brought forth wild Grapes*: But he has given to every Man *effectual* Grace; ſuch Grace, I mean, as in Reaſon may, and in Fact will, produce the intended Effect, if the Receiver uſes his utmoſt Endeavours; that is, if he takes all the Care that Men cuſtomarily and ordinarily do in all other Points, though of leſs Concern, when they ſet their Hearts upon them. For God hath

hath promiſed in Scripture, that he will deal with us in beſtowing Grace as an affectionate Parent does in giving his Child a Suſtenance. He will not give him ſo ſparing a Proviſion as may barely keep him alive; but ſuch a Sufficiency as may make Life eaſy and comfortable to him: Even ſo will our heavenly Father beſtow the Riches of his Grace to facilitate the Election of thoſe, whoſe Hearts are ſet upon their eternal Intereſt, with as much Earneſtneſs as they ſometimes are upon their temporal; and who uſe the ſame Induſtry and Application in the Attainment of the former, as they do in the latter. SERM. II.

To this let it be added, that although in other Caſes the Will and the Power are very diſtinct Things, yet here they are in many Inſtances the ſame, and perfectly co-incide; for, as all Virtue is ſeated in the Will, the very fixed and determined Will to be virtuous, is Virtue itſelf. He who is reſolved, with the whole Energy of his Mind, to be a better Man, is in Fact, the better for being ſo reſolved; as, on the other Side, he that is reſolved to be wicked, is really ſo, though he may not have an Opportunity of perpetrating the outward Act.

We ſee then, that we have the ſame natural Power, the ſame gracious Aid and Aſſiſtance, for perſevering and improving in every Virtue and Grace, as we had originally for attaining them. What then ſhould reſtrain or hinder our continual Progreſs? Does the Difficulty lie in the Thing itſelf? Is it an harder Taſk to continue and grow more perfect in an Habit of Virtue, than it is at firſt to acquire ſuch Habit? On the contrary, it has always been preſumed, and always allowed, that what-

SERM. II.

ever Difficulties and Diſcouragements may attend our firſt Entrance on the Paths of Virtue, yet on purſuing our Journey we find the Proſpect more chearful and inviting every Step we take: Whatever Mixtures of Vice may debaſe the firſt Compoſitions of Virtue, yet each Repetition of good Actions, like the repeated Eſſays of the Refiner, ſeparates the Droſs, and leaves the Subſtance more pure. However the Soul, at it's firſt Riſing from the Ground, may flutter and mount heavily; yet, when once it is thoroughly upon the Wing, it flies along with an eaſy, vigorous, and continued Motion; and, in Alluſion to the Words of the Text, though the firſt Dawn of Religion upon the Souls of Men may be but as the Wings of the Morning, ſpreading themſelves upon the Mountains, yet it gradually attains to a meridian Altitude.

Labour and Exerciſe may be proſecuted to ſuch Degrees of Exceſs as to render the Body weary, weak, and languid; the Purſuits of Knowledge may be carried ſo far as to impair the intellectual Powers; ſo that an immoderate Application to Study may not only create a *Wearineſs in the Fleſh*, but may endanger the whole Conſtitution of the Mind; and in endeavouring to make ourſelves *wiſe*, by ſifting into ſubtle Speculations, we may, literally ſpeaking, become *Fools:* Nay, our very Will, when oppreſſed and overborne by irregular and tumultuous Paſſions, is forced frequently to yield and give Way; whereby we are delivered over to the Extremes either of Rage or Melancholy. But none of the Faculties of our Minds, or Organs of our Bodies, are the leaſt endangered

endangered by the Meditations on, and the Practices of Virtue and Religion. On the contrary, Virtue has the ſame Effect on the Eye of the Underſtanding, as Light has on the corporeal Eye, it refreſhes and enlivens our Spirits, and ſpreads a Chearfulneſs over every Thing around us. SERM. II.

The Finger of the Almighty ſeems viſible in this, pointing out unto us the Employment whereunto we ought principally to devote ourſelves: Inaſmuch as he who hath created all Things with ſuch a Diſpoſition and Fitneſs to certain Uſes and Ends, that, in following this natural Bent, they arrive at the greateſt Perfection in themſelves, and at the ſame Time are productive of the greateſt Good to the Univerſe; but by any other Appropriation, become either uſeleſs, as incompetent to attain the ill-deſigned Effect, or produce ſomething monſtrous and injurious: He, I ſay, hath ordained *our* Frame with ſuch an Aptitude to moral and religious Exerciſes, that whereas every other continued Application is attended always with ſomething that is irkſome and diſtaſteful, often with ſomething that is pernicious and deſtructive; yet ſo far are we from feeling any Wearineſs in well-doing, that moral and religious Meditations are the very Food of the Soul. Adding Virtue to Virtue is adding Strength to Strength; the greater Acquiſitions we make of this Sort, as in the Caſe of wordly Riches, we are enabled thereby to make ſtill the greater.

One great Reaſon why Men do not quicken their Pace more in the Ways of Goodneſs, is owing to a very great Miſtake in the Judgments they are apt to form of themſelves by uſing a deceitful Standard.

SERM. II. They are not at any Trouble to get exact Notices of Perfection and Goodneſs, and to examine their Lives by ſuch truly imitable Patterns: They never conſider Virtue in her native and divine Image, they only conſider it as brought down to their Senſes in the Lives of other People; and, through Self-partiality, are apt to imagine themſelves full as good as, if not better than, they; and therefore ſit down with a thorough Self-Complacency, preſuming their Work is already done. Whereas Men of Senſe, be they ever ſo good, are not vain and elate with Goodneſs, but rather diffident of it and themſelves; and therefore they are ſtill preſſing on to higher Degrees of Piety, becauſe they form in their Minds an Idea of Perfection. And this being the Teſt whereby they judge of themſelves and their Actions, and finding how far the Copy falls ſhort of the Original, they are far from being ſatisfied with themſelves: They never think themſelves good enough, but endeavour to make themſelves as good as they can be.

It is true, ſeveral in the lower Rank and Condition of Life have neither Leiſure nor Capacity to attain to any competent Degrees of Knowledge or Learning; and therefore are not qualified to fill ſuch Stations as allow of the Exerciſe of ſublime, heroic, and extenſive Virtues; but ſtill a large Field is opened for their Progreſs and Improvement. They may grow more regular in their Attendance on the ſacred Ordinances; more diſpoſed to receive Inſtruction from their Teachers, more induſtrious in their Callings, more friendly to their Neighbours, more patient under Provocations, more reſigned to the Diſpenſations of Providence. If Men's Hearts be truly

dedicated

dedicated to God's Service, he will meaſure their Work, not by the Value it may have in itſelf, but by the Proportion it bears to their Abilities. In the Kingdom of Chriſt there is neither *Barbarian nor Scythian, neither bond nor free*; all the Diſtinction *there* is founded on the *inward Condition* of the Mind: True Liberty *there* is a Freedom from the Slavery of Sin; true Nobility is to excell in Virtue. SERM. II.

So far then ought we to be from conſidering this Life as a dull, confined Round of the ſame inſignificant Trifles, that we ought to look upon it as an indefinite Line; wherein every Step we take is, or ought to be, an important and valuable Advance in Goodneſs: An Addition to that Number of good Actions, whoſe Sum will render our Happineſs the more exalted and complete. It will carry us on till we become here on Earth a little lower than the Angels; and, by a natural and eaſy Tranſition, ſhall be made equal to them in Heaven: Which leads me,

II*dly*, To offer ſome Reaſons and Conſiderations to engage us in ſuch a Practice. And,

1*ſt*, Let it be conſidered that this progreſſive State is our *Duty*. And in this View we may obſerve, that the Scriptures have not determined what preciſe Quantity of Goodneſs, neither more nor leſs, will intitle us to the Favour of God; and, by that, to the *Inheritance that fadeth not away*: It being their Deſign to make Men not juſt ſo far virtuous, and no farther; but to make them as virtuous and pious as poſſible. Accordingly we are commanded

SERM. II. to *grow in Grace*, to go *on to Perfection*, to be *perfect*, *even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*; to be *holy*, *as He is holy*; *merciful*, *as He is merciful*. The *Degrees* indeed of theſe Perfections we ſhall never be able fully to reach, nor is it the Intention of the Command that we ſhould: But it is in our Power to make a conſtant and continued Progreſs in the *Kinds* of theſe Perfections; and thence ariſes our Obligation to advance in the *Degrees* as far as the Sum of our Faculties, exerciſed and improved to the utmoſt, can carry us. For ridiculous and intolerable would be the Pretence, that, becauſe the Diſtance of any Point is infinite, therefore it is not in our Power to make any Approaches towards it. Truth, Juſtice, Mercy, Goodneſs, and Holineſs are eſſentially and eternally the ſame in their own Nature. And ſince God hath been pleaſed to create us in his own Image, by enduing us with Reaſon, and thereby making us capable of exerciſing theſe his own Attributes, which, in a lower Degree, he hath graciouſly communicated to us; ſo by our diligent Improvement in them, by beholding, as in a Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, we are renewed more intimately into that Image; we attain to a nearer Reſemblance of his Divine Nature. The Rule is perfect, that Scope might be given to the moſt exalted Virtue; but the abſolute Perfection of it unattainable, that *he that glorieth may glory in the Lord*. Our Condemnation will not lie in this, that we did not exactly tranſcribe the Original; but that we did not make the Copy ſo complete as was in our Power. The beſt Conviction and Aſſurance then, that we can have of truly diſcharging our Duty, is the Evidence of this Progreſs in our Chriſtian Courſe.

It

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It is not uncommon indeed to hear ſome Men expreſs themſelves in ſuch Terms of Indifference about their religious Conduct, as if it were the leaſt Concern they had in the World; to hear them make a Jeſt of the high Strains of Piety and Goodneſs which they obſerve in others, and ludicrouſly, or rather profanely declare, they do not pretend to be ſuch Saints; they ſhould be content with the loweſt Place in Heaven. Happy, no Doubt, will he be, who, by a faithful Diſcharge of his Duty to the utmoſt of his Power, ſhall obtain a Place in the loweſt of the heavenly Manſions: But for Men, with an Air of Preſumption, to pretend to cut out for themſelves juſt ſuch a Portion of Duty as they think will intitle them to an ineſtimable Reward; and, like wary Dealers, put themſelves to no more Expence than what they judge will be barely neceſſary to purchaſe that Pearl to which the Kingdom of Heaven is compared: This is a *Covetouſneſs which is Idolatry:* It is ſacrificing the Riches of God's Goodneſs, their natural and ſpiritual Powers, to their own Indolence and Wantonneſs: It is doing a *Deſpight* to that *Spirit of Grace*, which otherwiſe might have become a reigning Principle in their Hearts, and productive of many generous and worthy Actions. Had he, to whom were committed *five* Talents in the Parable, gained no more than him to whom *two* only were committed, can we think he would have merited the Title of *a good and faithful Servant?* No, of a *wicked and ſlothful Servant? ſlothful*, in not making the moſt of them; *wicked*, in reſolving not to make the moſt of them. In ſhort, they who

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are bleſſed with the higheſt Powers, whether intellectual, moral, or ſpiritual, are under a ſtrict Obligation to employ them in all the Offices of Goodneſs, and in Degrees proportionable to thoſe Powers. The Command given by St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, concerning thoſe who have wordly Riches, virtually extends to *them*; and under the ſame Penalty, the Forfeiture of their Salvation,——*Charge them, that they be rich in good Works.*

If any Man thinks himſelf already as virtuous and good as he needs to be; it is a certain Sign, he has not yet arrived at any Eminence in Virtue. For from thence, as from a riſing Ground, the Proſpect would enlarge upon him, and enable him to deſcry vaſtly-diſtant Tracts, to which the ſmall Space that he had already meaſured bore no Proportion. Few Men will pretend to have made equal Advances with St. *Paul* towards Perfection; he being one of thoſe Perſons, that, whatever they do, do it *with all their Soul*, and *with all their Strength*: yet he was far from thinking that he had finiſhed his Work, or that he might remit any Thing of his Endeavours. On the contrary, we find him imitating the Alacrity of thoſe who run in a Race; who do not ſo much conſider what Quantity of Ground they have already cleared, as how much ſtill remains, to call forth their Strength and Agility. *Not*, ſays he, *as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: But I follow after, if that I may apprehend That for which I alſo am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended: But this one Thing I do; forgetting thoſe Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe Things which are before,*

I preſs

I preſs towards the Mark, (or Goal) *for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* And it is remarkable, that he urges the Imitation of this his Example, not only to thoſe of the *Philippians*, who were newly entered into the Chriſtian Profeſſion, and conſequently can be ſuppoſed to have made but ſlender Improvements in it; but, *Let us*, ſays he, *as many as are* perfect, *be thus minded.* SERM. II.

We ſee then how much it is the Duty of the very beſt of us to be always improving in Goodneſs, and growing in Grace; to be endeavouring *after the Fulneſs of the Meaſure of our Stature in Jeſus Chriſt*; the only Stature to which we can add ſeveral Cubits by taking Thought: And we may venture to pronounce the State of that Man to be dangerous, and that he will never arrive at Heaven, who ſits down, either under a lazy and affected Deſpondency of being able to proceed no farther; or under a vain and impious Preſumption of having already gone far enough.

2. A ſecond Conſideration ariſes from the *Advantages* we ſhall reap from the progreſſive State. The *Firſt* whereof is, that it will ſuperſede the Truſt and Confidence which too many are apt to repoſe in Repentance: whereon, it is to be feared, a much greater Streſs is laid than it will be able to bear. Indeed *Repentance*, at the firſt Publication of the Goſpel, was required as a neceſſary Qualification for ſuch of the *Gentiles* as embraced Chriſtianity; but after they became Chriſtians, higher Terms of Duty were preſſed upon them. They were to leave Repentance as a firſt Principle, like as Men do the Rudiments of any Science, and enjoined to go on to Perfection. The Heathen World was ſunk in ſuch Degrees of Wickedneſs,

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Wickedneſs, that the Change to Chriſtianity was a Kind of *moral Reſurrection*. *You who were* dead *in Treſpaſſes and Sins—hath he* quickened. The Powers of the Mind at this ſpiritual Birth, bore a Reſemblance to the Powers of the Body at their natural Birth; and had they advanced no farther, they had ſtill continued *Babes in Chriſt*. Leaving Vice is one Thing, and Improvement in Virtue, another; and nothing is more clear from the whole Tenour of the *New Teſtament*, than that the Lives of Chriſtians were to be as different from the Lives of Heathens, as Light is from Darkneſs: And therefore we may conclude, that it never could be the Deſign of the Goſpel, that Men ſhould live in that ambiguous, divided, and diſtracted State of ſinning and repenting; of being Heathens and Chriſtians by Turns. No Doubt can be made but Chriſtians, by the Help of a good Education, and early Impreſſions of Religion upon their Minds, may live free from the Habits of all Sin, and from every ſuch ſingle Act of it as is groſs and enormous. And after Men have indulged themſelves in vicious Liberties, with a View of making Repentance their Refuge; it may be queſtioned, whether the moſt ſincere Repentance will not be ſuch as they may have Reaſon to repent of. The Wound in their Conſcience may be healed in ſome Sort, but it will always reſemble the Caſe of other Wounds; where there is never ſuch an Union and Incorporation as there was in the original Compoſition.

Now nothing will more effectually prevent any Danger of this Kind (and this is the leaſt Danger that attends a Reliance on Repentance) than being actuated by thoſe more generous Principles which accompany the progreſſive State. If Men form ſuch faint

faint Reſolutions of Perſeverance in their Duty, as to leave ſome ſecret Reſerve for the Admiſſion of Sin, it is more than probable they will ſoon have Occaſion for ſuch an Expedient; when our Actions ſpring from mean Motives, it is no Wonder if they are confined within narrow Limits, and conclude in inglorious Atchievements. But when the Fear of Puniſhment becomes but a ſubordinate Incentive to moral Attainments, and the Love of Virtue takes the Lead in our Inclinations; when our Duty is not performed with the heartleſs Thought of it's being our Duty, but when it becomes a freewill Offering, and preſents itſelf as a Kind of Temptation to our Deſires; when the Pleaſure we have experienced from the Progreſs we have made, adds Life and Vigour to our farther Purſuits; when we are not driven forwards by the Rebukes of an evil Conſcience, but led on by the Acclamation and Applauſe of a good one; then will the Soul be conſcious of her innate Greatneſs and Dignity, and we ſhall be ſo far from ſinking into the Dregs of Vice, that, as a Philoſopher ſaid of his Maſter, we ſhall almoſt bluſh to find ourſelves in the Body. SERM. II.

And as the progreſſive State is the beſt Means for *bringing* us to an uniform and unreſerved Obedience; ſo, which is a *ſecond* Advantage, it is the beſt, if not the only Security for our *Perſeverance* in it. It is not allowed us, in this unſtable Condition of Things, to arrive at ſuch a Situation as we may expect to enjoy without any farther Care or Concern. Like an Arrow ſhot up into the Air, if we do not continue to aſcend higher in the Scale of moral and religious Duties, we ſhall ſoon deſcend to ſomething below

SERM. II. below them. The Mind then is to be kept continually upon the Stretch, our Attention excited, and our Affections enlivened by divine Contemplations; our Reſolutions enforced by the View of higher Advantages, our good Habits farther ſtrengthened and confirmed by the frequent Exerciſe of good Actions. We are, as it were, ſailing againſt the Wind; and if we remit any Thing of our Strength or Activity, ſo as not to proceed, we muſt of Courſe be driven back. The Faculties of the Mind, as well as the Members of the Body, by frequent Uſe, gain a Kind of mechanic Eaſe and Readineſs; and, by Remiſſion and Diſuſe, abate of that Skill and Aptneſs in the Performance. By intermitting our Converſe with Things of a ſpiritual Nature, we loſe our Taſte and Reliſh for them; a Sort of Indiſpoſition is bred in the Soul, the Parent of a vitiated and depraved Appetite. And hence it comes to paſs, that the Lives of moſt Men take their Turns, like the Sea, of an alternate Ebbing and Flowing; whereas they ought to reſemble the Courſe of a River, which is receiving perpetual Supplies: which, at the ſame Time that they augment it's Streams, add Weight to it's Flow, till it finally terminates in the Ocean.

But, farther, what is conſequent upon, and crowneth all other Advantages, the progreſſive State is the beſt Teſtimony we can have of our being in a ſalvable Condition. There are ſome who would perſuade us, that our Converſion to a regenerate State is performed in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye; and manifeſted by ſome extraordinary *Feeling*, *Experience*, or *Impulſe*. This indeed is a ſhort Way, but

but the Security of it may be much queſtioned. High and extraordinary Pretenſions, where we ſee no competent Foundation for them, juſtly alarm us with a Suſpicion, that the Perſons who lay Claim to them, are either themſelves deceived, or deſign to deceive others. And as we are ſatisfied, the Boaſt of *Infallibility* in the *Romiſh* Church has been the Source of the groſſeſt *Errors*; ſo it is not leſs to be feared, that theſe pretended infallible Signs of *Converſion* may tend to the *Perverſion* of many weak, though ſincere Chriſtians. For, as it is not poſſible to communicate the Manner of theſe ſenſible internal Operations, any more than it is to make one Man feel for another; a *Criterion* will be wanted, whereby to judge whether they are Impreſſions of the Spirit of God, or are occaſioned by the Workings of a warm and diſturbed Imagination. Here then we are beſet with a double Danger; on one Hand we may fancy ourſelves to have thoſe Symptoms of a ſalvable State when we have them not, and ſo may be eaſily betrayed into a fatal Security; on the other, though our Condition might in itſelf be full of Hope, yet, for Want of theſe ſignificant Emotions, we might be thrown into the utmoſt Deſpair. But a Man can never be miſtaken in the Survey of ſuch Actions as being laid in the Principles of ſound Reaſon, are conducted by the Rule, and ſupported by the Faith of the Goſpel: whoſe Numbers are meaſured by all the Opportunities we have or can find, and whoſe intrinſick Excellency means to imitate the Perfection of the Divine Actions themſelves. But it is Time to proceed to the

SERM. II.

III. *Third*

SERM. II. III. *Third* Thing I propoſed, which was to make a Reflection or two relating to the Subject. And,

1*ſt*, From what has been ſaid it appears how groundleſs and unreaſonable all thoſe Complaints are, which we hear ſo often repeated concerning human Life; that it is an inſignificant, capricious, and wayward State; by ſome looked upon as a Comedy, by others as a Tragedy, and by many as an odd Mixture of both. For, in Truth, all this proceeds from the falſe Judgment of thoſe who conſider it not as a *Means* to an End, but as an *End* itſelf; and ſo expect to reap that Satisfaction from it, which it was never deſigned to give. Let us but once correct this Miſtake, and direct the Scope of all our Actions to the Attainment of Happineſs hereafter, and a great Share of Happineſs will, of Courſe, fall in our Way, without our looking for it. But, by this ſtrange Perverſion of the Order of Things, we take a ſure Method of being diſappointed in our Expectations of Happineſs both here and hereafter. The Means not being employed to their proper End, become uſeleſs in that Reſpect: and by being conſidered as an End, we act according to that prepoſterous Concluſion, and thereby involve and embarraſs ourſelves in inextricable Difficulties. And hence it comes to paſs, that ſo many are ſick of themſelves, and look upon Life as tedious, diſtaſteful, and nauſeous; and are inclined to quarrel with the Diſpenſations of Providence for not making them more perfect than they are. Whereas were their Nature by many Degrees more perfect, by thus miſapplying the Powers of it, their Unhappineſs would be ſtill the greater:

greater: for the nobler we ſuppoſe the Faculties of the Soul, the leſs ſatisfying would every Thing in this World be found. In ſhort, take away the Notion of a future State, and you leave nothing ſubſtantial in the preſent, except Miſery: Allow a future State it's due Weight, and nothing in this Life will ſeem uſeleſs or impertinent: You add many ſubſtantial Bleſſings; the Afflictions of Life will point their own Remedy; and you will remove what is moſt miſerable in Miſery it ſelf: And the leſs perfect you are, the more inclined will you be to adore the Goodneſs of God, who hath appointed ſuch an ineſtimable Reward for ſuch imperfect Services as your's are, or can be. SERM. II.

2*dly*, If we are perſuaded of the Truth of the Doctrine that has been advanced, what ſhall we think of the State of thoſe Men, who are purſuing a Courſe of Life in direct Oppoſition to it; who, inſtead of daily proceeding in all Virtue and Godlineſs, are daily adding to the Number and Malignity of their Sins? What can we think indeed? but that it *had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them.* Let their Danger ſuggeſt to us the Means of our own Security: And let us not entertain a mean Opinion of the Power which Chriſtianity has to reform the World, from the ſmall Effects that we find it has on the Minds of but too many. The beſt Religion that God can give unto Man is not deſigned, nor can it be deſigned, to over-rule his Will; but to impower him to give it a right Direction. Let us conſider what our Religion *can* do by what we know

SERM. II. know in Fact it *has* done. It was the high Commendation of an exemplary *Roman*, that while he lived in the very Dregs and Corruption of his own Republick, he formed his Manners by the Model of one that was accounted the most perfect: Let it be our's to keep continually in our Eye the Pattern which the primitive Christians have left us; and, by copying after it, approve ourselves blameless and harmless, *the Sons of God without Rebuke in the Midst of a perverse Nation, among whom* let us *shine as Lights in the World.*

Lastly, We may observe, it has pleased our Creator to constitute our Frame in such a Manner, that we advance gradually to the perfect Use of Reason: A Faculty whose Increase we are for a long Time as insensible of, as we are of the Increase of our Stature. We have likewise very good Arguments to persuade us, that the Soul in a future State will not stop short at any certain Period of Happiness; but that she will continually enlarge her intellectual Powers, and augment her Capacities; purify her Desires, and inflame her Affections; receive new Accessions of Bliss and Glory, and thereby make perpetual Approaches towards the Fountain of all Perfection. In this, we may well presume, will consist the Happiness of those faithful Servants, who shall be found to have done their Master's Will here on Earth. And a more pleasing Consideration cannot offer itself to the Mind of Man. Ought we not therefore to conclude, that during the intermediate Interval, in order to render the Whole of our Existence of a piece, the Soul, by Parity of Reason, should preserve the same Tenor of Improvement? Let us then

consider

conſider how far we are advanced in the Path of Life, and how far we have made it the *Path of the Juſt*. Let us cultivate all our moral Faculties to ſuch Degrees as to render them worthy to be accompanied by divine Grace. Let us endeavour to preſerve ſuch an uniform Obedience in our Lives, that they may know no Variety but in their Increaſe towards Perfection: And as we are daily growing nearer to Eternity, God grant that we may be more and more prepared for a bleſſed Eternity! SERM. II.

SERMON III.

National Wickedneſs in Danger of provoking National Judgments.

Preached in the Time of the late Rebellion.

ISAIAH V. 4, 5.

What could have been done more for my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked for Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes? And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my Vineyard: I will take away the Hedge thereof, and it ſhall be eaten up; and break down the Wall thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down.

SERM. III.

IN this beautiful Parable God, under the Image of a Vineyard, ſets before the *Jews*, his choſen People, the many and great ſpiritual Bleſſings he had conferred upon them; as great a Meaſure of Grace as the Divine Goodneſs itſelf (in Concert and Harmony with eternal Rectitude and Juſtice) could beſtow; could beſtow, I mean, for the Probation of ſuch rational Beings as ſhould be in their Circumſtances — *What could have been done more for my Vineyard that I have not done in it?* He goes on to repreſent

ſent their ungrateful Returns, in the Abuſe of thoſe Bleſſings; and aſks, in the Way of human Aſtoniſhment —— *Wherefore when I looked*, that it ſhould bring forth *Grapes*, *brought it forth wild Grapes?* But, in Proportion to the Greatneſs of the Mercy ſlighted, will the Severity of Juſtice be inflicted: In Conſequence therefore of their neglecting and deſpiſing God's gracious Overtures of making them *a peculiar Treaſure to himſelf above all People*, in Conſequence of their Impiety, heightened by every Circumſtance of Ingratitude, he threatens them with an utter Extirpation —— *I will take away the Hedge* of my Vineyard, *and it ſhall be eaten up*; *and break down the Wall thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down.* SERM. III.

The Occaſion of the preſent Solemnity will ſuggeſt to you my Deſign of applying this Parable to the Circumſtances of our Nation; and, agreeably thereto, I ſhall conſider,

I*ſt*, What God hath done for us, and what Returns we have made.

II*dly*, What we may expect as the Conſequence of our Ingratitude and Impiety.

III*dly*, The proper Means to avert and remove God's Diſpleaſure.

I*ſt*, I am to conſider what God hath done for us, and what Returns we have made.

In early Ages, when we were over-run with Heatheniſm and Idolatry, it pleaſed God to plant the Chriſtian Religion among us: A Religion every

SERM. III.

Way worthy of the Divine Diſpenſation, and ſuited to the Exigencies of Mankind. A Religion the moſt heavenly the World was ever bleſſed with; and bleſſing all the Kingdoms wherein it ſhould be received with the greateſt Happineſs, national, ſocial, and perſonal: Containing every Motive to Goodneſs which can be ſuggeſted: Our Sins are forgiven upon a ſincere and unfeigned Repentance; and our Pardon ſealed with the Blood of a gracious Redeemer. To a Perſeverance in the Paths of Virtue, we are allured by Precepts of the pureſt Morality, exhorted by the Promiſe of divine Grace, and encouraged by the Reward of an eternal Crown of Glory.

When this Religion had flouriſhed many Centuries in it's native and unallayed Purity, in a very dark and unlearned Age it became adulterated with impure Doctrines, and quite over-grown with an Heap of monſtrous Abſurdities: But it pleaſed God, by the Miniſtry of his faithful Servants, to re-enlighten this Land with the Beams of Truth; to reſtore Chriſtianity to it's original Simplicity and Sincerity.

Then was the Key of Knowledge, which had been long taken away, again recovered into our Hands; which, at the ſame Time that it unlocked the ſacred Truths of the Scripture, laid open the myſterious Iniquity of *Popery*; and helped us to diſcover, that the Boaſt of Infallibility tended to nothing better than to introduce the groſſeſt Ignorance, and to make Error incurable. At the breaking in of this Light, the evil Spirit of *Popery* departed; and we were freed from thoſe Chains in which we had been faſt bound for many Generations. Then

had

had we the Happineſs to ſee the Church, which, by *Romiſh* Artifices, had been made to encroach upon the juſt Rights of the civil Government, become the moſt friendly and favourable to it. Our Reformation from *Popery* was conducted by ſuch peaceable, diſcreet, and deliberate Steps, and in ſo ſtrict a Conformity to primitive Uſages, that the Plan of it was the Envy of *foreign* Nations; unhappy only in this, that it was not copied by every Part of our *own*. This, however, ſerved to convince us, that the mutual Intereſts of our Church and State are laid ſo truly upon the ſame Foundation, that Both muſt riſe and fall together. This we found in the Courſe of a few ſucceeding Years, by an Experience but too dearly-bought; when the Evil Spirit of Rebellion could not compleat it's Conqueſts without liſting Enthuſiaſm into it's Train; and when, by their combined Forces, they compaſſed the Deſtruction of both the Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Polity. But this gave Occaſion for a freſh Inſtance of God's Loving-kindneſs towards us; when ſo wonderful was the Deliverance that he wrought for us, ſo much beyond all human Foreſight, Expectation, or Hope, that in the Accompliſhment of it we *were like unto thoſe that dream*. Good Reaſon had we to rejoice; good Reaſon have we ſtill to rejoice for the great Things that the Lord then did for us. SERM. III.

Again were reſtleſs and repeated Attempts made to re-eſtabliſh Popery; again the Hand of the Almighty ſeaſonably interpoſed, and defeated the almoſt-accompliſhed Deſigns of the *Romiſh* Emiſſaries. This laſt Deliverance was wrought for us at the memorable Æra of the *Revolution*; an Æra never to

SERM. III. be forgotten by any Member of the Church of *England* that thinks and acts conſiſtently.

And now we have a Religion which diſplays itſelf in all the Beauty of Holineſs. The Worſhip of God, in Conformity to the Spirit of Chriſtianity, is manly, ſolemn, and majeſtic, without any Thing of theatrical Pomp and Pageantry: Plain and ſimple, without any Thing mean, indecent, or irreverent: Prayers level to the loweſt Underſtanding, yet fit to warm and inſpirit the Devotions of the higheſt: Affectionate and fervent, without any over-ſtrained Flights: Compoſed and rational, without any Thing flat, dead, or low. Chriſtianity, as eſtabliſhed in the Church of *England*, (I ſpeak the Sentiments of my Heart,) is the beſt fitted in the World to make it's Profeſſors rationally, ſoberly, and ſubſtantially religious: free from the wild Ravings of Enthuſiaſm, on the one Hand; and the Worſhip of dumb Idols, on the other: On this Side, from the Crudities of unpremeditated, extemporary Effuſions; on that, from the ſenſeleſs and abſurd Practice of praying in an unknown Tongue. In ſhort, every Thing is *reformed* among us, but, what wants very much to be *reformed*, our Manners. A Truth we ſhould be aſhamed to own; yet cannot deny, if we conſider what Returns we have made for the many ſignal Bleſſings we have received. For what indeed are thoſe Returns? A thorough Diſregard to Chriſtianity has prevailed, not only among the Great (for ſo Men in high Stations, however little in themſelves, will be called) but, by the Prevalence of their Example, it has deſcended even to the lower Sort: among whom there are many who pretend to be

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ſtaunch Unbelievers, and really are ſo, if we may judge by their Lives and Converſation. It is true, Chriſtianity is not now under ſuch a State of Perſecution as it was under the *Roman* Emperors; yet it ſtill undergoes one Kind of Perſecution, very grievous to ingenuous Minds, that of petulant Tongues and Pens as petulant; which ſpeak and write againſt it with ſo much Rudeneſs and Inſolence, as if Infidelity were eſtabliſhed by Law, and Chriſtianity barely tolerated. And to that Degree have they ſucceeded, that ſeveral, who have a Regard for the *Bible* at their Heart, dare not openly avow their ſacred Eſteem of it, for Fear of being made the ſtanding Mark of ill-bred Ridicule: forgetful of our Saviour's dread Sentence: *Whoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my Words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he ſhall appear with his holy Angels in the Glory of his Father.* SERM. III.

One would think, that a Religion againſt which ſo many Reproaches have been levelled, could have little or no Evidence for the Truth of it; yet ſo ſtrong is that Evidence, that one cannot reject it, without embracing monſtrous Abſurdities. For, to mention but one Circumſtance, how incredible is it, that a ſmall Number of poor, unlearned, and unfriended Men ſhould go upon ſuch an unparalleled and deſperate Undertaking, as to attempt the introducing a new Inſtitution of Religion, in Oppoſition to the ſtrong Faith of their own Countrymen, whoſe Religion had been inſtituted by God himſelf, in Oppoſition to the Powers in high Places, in Oppoſition to all the Prejudices of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, whoſe Schools flouriſhed with the moſt refined

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Philoſophy and Oratory: In Spite of all worldly Intereſt, nay, at the Hazard of the Lives of both themſelves and their Converts; how incredible, I ſay, is it that all this ſhould be attempted without a thorough Conviction of Truth in themſelves; how incredible it ſhould be effected without the Power of Miracles to convince others? In ſhort, whatever Objections are raiſed againſt Chriſtianity, I will venture to ſay, that as ſtrong and formidable ones may be raiſed againſt thoſe Branches of Knowledge, which admit of the greateſt Certainty.

And though a Diſbelief of the Goſpel be deſtitute of all Evidence, Reaſon, or Proof, whence it is a Matter of Surprize, that any thoughtful Man can be an Unbeliever; yet ſo far has *Deiſm* ſpread through every Rank and Order of Men, as if all the Evidence in the World were on that Side, and none at all on the other. And, by the Preſumption of their Strength, to ſuch an Height of Impiety have the Enemies of our holy Religion dared to proceed, as to ridicule the hiſtorical Narrations of the Scriptures, our Creeds, and other devotional Parts of our publick Service by the moſt profane Parodies; nay, to *blaſpheme that holy Name by which they are called.* Thoſe who dare not, nor is it fit they ſhould, vent their Reproaches againſt a crowned Head, have yet dared *to ſhoot out their Arrows, even bitter Words* againſt him who is far ſuperior to all Kings, to Angels and Archangels—— *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* Have any of the Nations among the Heathen vilified their Gods, which were yet no Gods, as ſome among us have that great Name, *which is above every Name in Heaven and Earth?*

And

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And now we may well apply, with a little Variation, that Allegory of the *Pſalmiſt*, which we cannot too much admire for it's inimitable Beauty, nor at the ſame Time too much lament, that the Application of it can be made with ſo great Propriety to our own Caſe: "O God, thou haſt brought a Vine (the "Chriſtian Religion) out of *Judæa*. Thou madeſt "Room for it, and when it had taken Root, it "filled the Land: The Hills were covered with the "Shadows, and the Boughs thereof were like the "goodly Cedars. It continued in a flouriſhing "State; ſhe ſtretched out her Branches unto the "Sea, and her Boughs unto the River's End. Why "haſt thou then broken down her Hedges, that "they that go by pluck off her Grapes? The wild "Boar out of the Wood doth root it up, and the "wild Beaſts of the Foreſt deſtroy it. Turn thee, "O God, look down, behold, and viſit this Vine, "and the Branch that thou madeſt ſo ſtrong for thy-"ſelf; but it is now ready to be cut down." In plain and unfigurative Words, the Light of Chriſtianity ſeems to ſtand quivering on a Point, ready to be extinguiſhed, and to leave us, as it firſt found us, bewildered in Paganiſm, *in Darkneſs, and in the Shadow of Death.*

We are not to expect, if the Chriſtian Religion, and it's divine Author, be thus contemned and vilified, that the Servants of that Lord, and the Miniſters of that Religion, ſhould meet with better Treatment. *If they have called the Maſter of the Houſe* Beelzebub; *how much more ſhall they call thoſe of his Houſhold?* While we were in imminent Danger of Popery, what a ſerious Senſe of Religion overſpread

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overſpread the Nation? At that great Criſis how were our Churches crowded, and their Altars frequented? How were they who officiated at thoſe Altars reſpected for their immortal Services againſt Popery, by their unanſwerable Confutations of it, by making the firſt and firmeſt Stand againſt it? But no ſooner was the Danger over, by the late happy Revolution, than we relapſed, like *Pharaoh*, who hardened his Heart as ſoon as the Storm of Hail was over, into Irreligion, Profaneneſs, and an avowed Diſregard to all fixed Principles; and baſely attacked that Order of Men, who, undiſmayed and unterrified, had ſtood in the Front of the Battle, and vanquiſhed all their Adverſaries. Then thoſe very Perſons, ſome of whom had put on the Diſguiſe of Popery, and others ſkulked in Corners, and continued ſilent (without one Word of their favourite Topicks, *Perſecution* and *Prieſtcraft*) threw off the Maſk, and came forth from their Coverts, where they had lain hid, and raiſed loud Outcries againſt the Clergy; though they, of all Men, have the leaſt Reaſon to exclaim againſt the Reformed Prieſthood. For to whom do they more owe that Liberty of Speech and Writing, which they have abuſed to ſo great Licentiouſneſs, than to that very Body of Men, ſome of whom purchaſed it for them at the Hazard of their Lives; who reſcued us from the Yoke of Popery by diſputing, writing, and dying for *Proteſtantiſm*; who gave their Bodies to be burnt for beautiful Liberty? And is this their Gratitude, to be continually levelling their Invectives againſt thoſe of that very Function to whom they are indebted, that they dare freely write or ſpeak at all? For, had it not

not been for Them, they might have been groaning underneath the Tyranny of Popery, and perhaps under the Torture of the Inquiſition. SERM. III.

Now though the Propagators of theſe Principles pretend, that the goodly End they have in View is to root out, from the Minds of Men, inveterate Prejudices, Bigotry, and Superſtition; and thereby to favour the Cauſe, and promote the Growth, of moral Virtue; yet we do not hear that they have boaſted of any Reformation which their Tenets have produced in the Lives of their Proſelytes: that either public or private Virtues have flouriſhed more in the Nation ſince their Interpoſal in religious Inſtruction: that the Love of our Country has more eminently diſtinguiſhed itſelf in projecting more benevolent and diſintereſted Schemes for the Good of the Publick; that we ſee more of Juſtice, Temperance, and Chaſtity; and leſs of Luxury, Venality, Corruption, and Perjury. The Truth is, we are not left to gueſs whether the contrary Effects may not have been wrought; they are, I doubt, too clearly ſeen, too ſenſibly felt. Many Vices that uſed to be looked upon with Horror and Amazement, are now become ſo common, that they are not regarded; or, if regarded, ſerve only to promote Jeſt, or Sport, or Laughter. Gravity, Serioufneſs, aud Authority no more appear in the Demeanour of Parents; nor Modeſty, Reverence, and dutiful Regard in the Behaviour of Children. Inſtead of aſſembling in the Houſe of God to ſanctify the Sabbath by Prayer and Thankſgiving, we hear of the Profanation of that holy Day in *Aſſemblies* of another

SERM. III. another Sort. In ſhort, ſo degenerate and diſſolute are our Manners become, that all the Religion that is left among us is little more than a juſt Abhorrence of Popery; and but too much verify the Obſervation which Foreigners have made of us, that we are a Nation of Proteſtants, but not of Chriſtians. And this brings me to conſider,

II*dly*, What we may expect as the Conſequence of our Ingratitude and Impiety.

There needs no formal nor laboured Proof to demonſtrate, that Vice, when diffuſed through a Kingdom, and in it's higheſt Degrees of Malignancy, muſt have a fatal Influence over the whole Community, and at laſt accompliſh the Deſtruction of it: We need but obſerve the Symptoms of it, as they diſcover themſelves in the Affairs of private Perſons and Families, and the Reſult of that Obſervation will determine the Point. Vice, in it's univerſal Progreſs, muſt be attended with Idleneſs and immoderate Expence; the ſure Fore-runners, or rather the natural Parents, of Poverty. Poverty indeed, honeſt Poverty, would caſt about for honeſt and unthought-of Expedients for ſupporting it's ſelf, and bettering it's Condition; but Poverty, contracted by the profligate Courſes of Drunkenneſs, Lewdneſs, and Debauchery, takes quite another Turn, and preys upon the little Induſtry that is left in the Nation, and thereby gives a Check to that very Induſtry: for the leſs ſecure Men grow in their Properties, the leſs will they labour to improve them. Hence will it come to paſs, that, among thoſe of higher Condition, Self-intereſt will be made the ruling Principle; which will

will be ready on all Occaſions to ſacrifice the Good of the Community to it's own ſordid Gratifications. And, among the meaneſt of the People, what Power, can we ſuppoſe, will the Voice of human Laws have againſt the louder Calls of Poverty, ſet free from the Barrier of Conſcience; and thereby at Liberty to relieve itſelf by all the Methods that Wickedneſs can ſuggeſt? What are the Terrors of Death (an Expedient too that every wiſe Nation would, if poſſible, prevent) to thoſe who have no farther Apprehenſions of it, but that it puts an End to all their Miſeries? And is it not true in Fact, that Rapine, Theft, and Murder have, in ſome Parts of the Land, been ſo ſupported by their ſeveral Bands, that the Arm of the civil Magiſtrate has been thought too weak to curb and reſtrain them; and that our military Force (no very deſirable Support of an *Engliſh* Conſtitution) has been called in to repreſs their Inſolence and Audaciouſneſs? In Proportion, as the Hands of the Government grow weak, will the Hearts of it's Enemies be ſtrengthened, and greater Force muſt ſtill be provided for it's Support; and the Maintenance of that muſt again fall on the Publick: and general Burthens of that Kind, ſhould they ever be felt, would be followed by a general Diſcontent. The Spirit of Diſcord, at any Time the greateſt Plague of a Community, will rage higher; more bold Steps muſt be taken to ſupport a ſinking Government, which will, on the other Hand, be more boldly controverted and controlled. And this will give a great Temptation to our foreign Enemies to take the Advantage of ſuch fatal Opportunities, and try to make us no more a Nation. And

what

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what fairer Opportunity can they expect or deſire, than to find the Nation, whoſe Conqueſt they are meditating, divided in it's Counſels, depreſſed in it's Courage by Idleneſs and Debauchery, and diſtreſſed by Poverty?

Nor will the Eccleſiaſtical Part of our Conſtitution be leſs in Danger from unſettled Principles, and from a general Diſſolution of Manners: For *Scepticiſm* and *Infallibility* approach cloſe to one another, like the extreme Points of Eaſt and Weſt: And however the thoughtful Part of the Nation may abhor Popery for it's numerous Abſurdities, the humane and good-natured for it's numerous Cruelties and Maſſacres; yet the profligate and debauched will be inclined to think more favourably of it for it's large Indulgences to, and Encouragements of, Immorality.

In the ordinary Courſe of Things then we ſee that Vice, when it becomes epidemical, is not only the Reproach, but bids fair for the Ruin of any People.

But this is not all —— when God's ordinary Methods of Reforming are loſt upon us, he will have Recourſe to ſome extraordinary Means; to ſome more awakening Notices of his Diſpleaſure. National Wickedneſs never failed, ſooner or later, to provoke the Almighty to a national Vengeance; and this is deferred, ſometimes, for no other Reaſon but that terrible one, of making the Execution more ſevere. Indeed we may have Reaſon to fear God's Judgments are already gone out. One Half of this united Kingdom is, at this Juncture, by the bold Invaders of our Liberties, made a Scene of Devaſtation, Rapine, and Slaughter; and ſo likewiſe is a conſiderable Part of the other: The Land before them

them being, in the Words of the Prophet, *like the Garden of* Eden, *and behind them a deſolate Wilderneſs.* But ſhould it pleaſe the Almighty to defeat the Deſigns of a deſperate Set of Men, engaged in a deſperate as well as unrighteous Cauſe; ſhould he ſend this Puniſhment in his Mercy, yet perhaps it may be the laſt Trial of his Mercy, and if we are not taught by it to learn Righteouſneſs, our Iniquity will draw down Ruin upon us in ſome other Shape, or from ſome other Quarter. For national Impiety is an Affront that ſtrikes more directly at Heaven, and which Heaven therefore is more nearly concerned to puniſh in a national Way: Such an Impiety, eſpecially, as this Nation is guilty of, the only one, of all Nations upon Earth, where Religion is eſtabliſhed in the greateſt Purity, and yet treated with the greateſt Contempt. While Religion maintains but ſo much Ground as to command an outward Reverence and Reſpect, ſome Hopes would be left, that it might in Time recover it's Authority, and recommend itſelf to our inward Eſteem: But when it has loſt all Hold upon us, when we do not only neglect it in Practice, but deride it in Principle, nothing is left but that God ſhould awaken us to a Senſe of his Being and Providence, by ſome ſuch extraordinary Judgment as *will make his Power to be known.*— Which brings me to conſider, SERM. III.

III*dly*, The proper Means whereby we may hope to avert God's Diſpleaſure.

And wherewithal ſhall a People laden with Iniquity appear before the Lord to turn away his Wrath, and to arreſt the Hand of Vengeance lifted up for their

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their Deſtruction? Hear the Almighty's own gracious Declaration —— *At what Inſtant I ſpeak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up and to pull down, and deſtroy it; if that Nation againſt whom I have pronounced turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them. God's Mercy is over all his Works*; but Nations and Kingdoms are the more peculiar Objects of his providential Care. This is not leſs agreeable to the Reſearches of Reaſon, than it is to the more ſure Reports of the Spirit of Truth ſpeaking in our holy Religion: If *not a Sparrow falls to the Ground without the Will of our heavenly Father*, how much more does his Providence watch over Man, who is *of more Value than many Sparrows?* How much more ſtill over thoſe larger Communities, in whoſe Calamities the moſt faithful and beſt of his Servants muſt be involved? But how much farther can we expect his Mercy ſhould extend than this, that even when their Reformation is ſo far deſpaired of, that he has denounced Judgment againſt them; yet he is willing to reverſe the Sentence on the eaſy Condition of their turning from the Evil? Now National Evil is the common Stock of Evil to which every Individual contributes his Share. As we then make a Part of the Nation, our Sins muſt make a Part of the National Guilt; and conſequently none of us can think ourſelves unconcerned in the important Work of a National Reformation. In vain would we endeavour to remove the Burthen from ourſelves by pretending, our Betters are as bad or worſe than we are; ſince we do not know how far the Conſequences of any one Vice may increaſe the Meaſure of that Iniquity from which, when

when it is filled up, we can expect nothing less than a final Destruction. SERM. III.

We have, I trust, not more out of a proper Regard to publick Authority, than in Compliance with our own pious Inclinations, prostrated ourselves before the Throne of Grace, to call down, by our Prayers, the Mercies of God upon this sinful Nation; to beseech him, that though he *should* be pleased *to chasten and correct us*; yet *that he would not finally give us over unto Death*: But let us remember, that those very Prayers, without Amendment of Life, would be an *Abomination to the Lord*: For what do we pray for, but that God would be pleased to accept our sincere Repentance? And how can that Repentance be accounted sincere, that does not produce a Reformation of our Manners?

Our Sins are the greatest Enemies that we have to fear; even Rebellion, unless the Sword should receive a judicial Commission from God, is not so much to be dreaded. Rebellion is like an Hurricane; which, however big with formidable Evils, is often of no long Duration, but Things settle again into Order and Regularity: It alarms the Nation, and puts every well-affected Person upon making a resolute Stand against it. But Irreligion paves the Way for such a Train of Vices as by Degrees sap and undermine the whole Constitution. Though it works our Ruin in a slower, yet it is in a surer Way. If the one be like a raging Fever in the Body, the other is like a slow, lingering Consumption; a flattering but a fatal Distemper, making us think all is well, when we are every Day making nearer Approaches to our Dissolution.

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Let us then return to thoſe Principles from which there has been a moſt dreadful Falling-off. *Let us hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith*, and in it the *well-grounded Hope of a bleſſed Immortality through Jeſus Chriſt.* Chriſtian Principles are the ſureſt, I may ſay the ſole Foundation on which a true Reverence to God can be laid. Theſe will therefore make us the beſt Men, and thereby the moſt faithful Subjects of the King, and the trueſt Lovers of our Country, by ſpeaking moſt home to our Conſcience.

And for our Encouragement in the Exerciſe of true Piety, and an unſpotted Innocence of Life, let us remember, that hereby we ſhall not only ſecure our own Salvation, and by our good Example ſet forward the Salvation of others, but may likewiſe be found of the Number of thoſe few Perſons, for whoſe Sake it may pleaſe the Almighty to ſpare the whole Nation. Virtue does not receive a Value from, but gives a true Value to Greatneſs: And however it may be placed more commodiouſly for Obſervation among thoſe of Diſtinction; yet in the Sight of God it is of as great Value among thoſe of lower Condition. *God is no Reſpecter of Perſons.*

It was ſaid by a Monarch, who was a Papiſt in Diſguiſe, that he owned the Reformed Religion was much better than the Popiſh; but thoſe of that Communion ſeemed to be in Earneſt about their Religion; but we ſeemed to be in Jeſt about our's. How far they may be in Earneſt about their's, I know not: but that wé, too many of us, ſeem to be in Jeſt about our's is, I doubt, too true. Let us remove this Reproach by a conſtant Attendance on each religious Duty in the publick Aſſembly, in our Families,

Families, and in our Cloſets: And let the Purity of our Church's Doctrines appear in the Purity of our Lives: And God grant that the holy Scriptures may recover their deſerved Eſteem among us, that we may ſo attend to the Voice of God ſpeaking to us by his Prophets, the Apoſtles, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, that all the *People may hear, and fear, and do no more preſumptuouſly!* SERM. III.

The END of the SERMONS.

Families, and in our Closets: And let the Purity of our Church's Doctrines appear in the Purity of our Lives: And God grant that the holy Scriptures may recover their deserved Esteem among us, that we may so attend to the Voice of God speaking to us by his Prophets, the Apostles, and his Son Jesus Christ, that all the People may learn, and fear, and do no more profanely!

SER. III.

The End of the SERMONS.

THREE LETTERS

TO A

FRIEND

ON THE

Satisfaction of CHRIST:

Wherein are *occaſionally* conſidered,

The *Infinity* of the DEITY, His *Eternity*, *Preſcience*, &c.

THREE LETTERS

TO A

FRIEND

ON THE

Satisfaction of CHRIST:

Wherein are occasionally considered,

The Infinity of the DEITY,

His Eternity, Prescience, &c.

The First LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

YOU ſum up the Force of your firſt Objection againſt the *Satisfaction* thus: "Whatever *Diſtinction* there is in the *Divine Nature*, yet it is a *Diſtinction* which enters not into "the *Eſſence* of that *Nature*. If then God the Son "be *truly* God, and God the Son *ſuffered* in our "Stead for the Sin of Man committed againſt God; "then the Conſequence muſt be, that *God ſuffered* "for a Crime committed againſt God." In Anſwer to this,

Firſt, Let it be obſerved, that God did not, *could not ſuffer* at all. The only Thing, that the ſecond Perſon in the Bleſſed Trinity did, was this; by aſſuming our Nature, and by a *perſonal Union* with it, he ennobled and exalted it ſo far, as to make it a *meritorious* Sacrifice. The *Godhead* then did not *ſatisfy*, It only empowered and enabled the *Human Nature* to ſatisfy the *Divine*, by ſtamping a Value upon it. And pray where is the Abſurdity of this Procedure? If you ſay, that the *Satisfaction* in the laſt Reſort terminates in God; I anſwer, ſo all *our* Sufficiency and Power does too. He is the Party *pleaſing*, and the Party *pleaſed*; ſince He gave and upholds

holds every Power and Faculty that we have. It is not ſufficient to reply, that *we* co-operate with God: becauſe, the *Human Nature* did act in *Concert* with the *Divine* in the Caſe now under Conſideration. In ſhort, God as well enables every One to *pleaſe* him, as he enabled Chriſt's *Human Nature* to *ſatisfy Him*.

Secondly, Let it be ſuppoſed that the *Divine Nature*, as *perſonalized* in Chriſt, ſatisfied the *Divine Nature*, as *perſonalized* in the Father. You tell me, "That my Caſe of two Kings jointly-reigning, One "of which foregoing his Right makes Satisfaction "to the Other for an Offence committed againſt "Both, doth not come up to the Point: becauſe "they are *two ſeparate Beings*," (for that is your Meaning) "though their *Authority* be the *ſame*."

Now, Sir, when we conſider the Divine Nature, I know of no Caſe, that can be exactly parallel to what concerns it. Whatever Caſe you can imagine, it will have no Property of an exact Parallel, except it be *this*; that the two Caſes, like Parallel Lines, will never meet.

But then, either Arguments from *Human* to *Divine* are *inconcluſive*, or they *are not*. If they are *inconcluſive*, then you cannot infer a Contradiction in *one* Nature from what is a Contradiction in *another*, and quite different Nature. No more than a Blind Man ought to conclude, that what is a Contradiction as to *Touch*, muſt be a Contradiction as to *Sight*. You muſt not infer that, ſince it is an Abſurdity for a *Man* to ſatisfy *Himſelf*, therefore it is an Abſurdity for the *Godhead*, branched out into Three Perſons, to ſatisfy *Itſelf*: This being to argue *à pari*, where

where there is an infinite Diſparity: It is the Fallacy called *Tranſitio à Genere ad Genus.*

But if you will contend, that Arguments *ab Humanis ad Divina* are *concluſive*, notwithſtanding there muſt be a boundleſs Diſproportion in all Debates concerning the *Subſtance* and *Perſonality* of the Divine Nature infinitely ſurpaſſing Human Comprehenſion; then I hope *my* Parallel may be intitled to the ſame Degree of Favour, to which *others* are, though not *exactly* correſponding.

Your Exception againſt the Parallel does not ſerve your Purpoſe. For though the *Subſtance* of the two Kings is *different*, *that* of the Trinity *one and the ſame*; yet I challenge you to prove, that the *Actions* of the Three Perſons in the Bleſſed Trinity may not be as truly *diſtinct*, as the *Actions* of One King are from thoſe of the Other.

If then the Three Perſons of the Bleſſed Trinity are inveſted with a Power of *acting diſtinctly*; if *receding* from *perſonal* Right to Puniſhment and *making* Satisfaction, are diſtinct Actions from *inſiſting* upon Right and *receiving Satisfaction*; then the Son might have as truly a Power to *forego* his Right, and to *ſatisfy*, and the Father to *accept* of the Compenſation, as in the Caſe of the two Kings jointly-reigning.

Either you muſt ſay, that the Three Perſons are not empowered to act *diſtinctly*, or you will never be able to prove from the *Unity* of the Divine Subſtance, that the One Perſon might not *make*, and the other *receive*, Satisfaction; which are *diſtinct Actions*. To uſe your own Words with a little Variation; the Party *offended*, namely *One* of the *Two* Perſons, forgives, out of *pure Mercy*, *His* Share of

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the Offence, and ſatisfies only for *that* Share of it which belongs to the *Other*, who is likewiſe a *diſtinct* Perſon, *offended*. To view the Matter in a true Light therefore, you muſt ſtrike off *One* of the Perſons from *any* Share of Right to the *Puniſhment*, viz. *That* Perſon whom you ſuppoſe to have forgiven, *&c.* Thus though the *ſame Nature* to which the Offence is *given*, as exiſting in the Son, is ſuppoſed to make Satisfaction to the *ſame Nature*, as exiſting in the Father; yet the *Perſon ſatisfying*, and the *Perſon ſatisfied*, are ſtill kept *diſtinct*.

What ſeems to have led you into your Miſtake is this; that you ſuppoſe, whatever *Diſtinction* there is in the Divine Nature, yet it is a *Diſtinction* which enters not into the *Eſſence* of that Nature. But this, I doubt, is not ſound Divinity; for the *Eſſence* is *diſtinct*, or *diſtinguiſhed*, though not *divided*, by the perſonal Properties. Each Perſon is an intelligent acting Subſtance inveſted with the *diſtinctive* Characters of *I*, *Thou*, *He*; and with perſonal Properties and Relations, not diſtinguiſhable into more intelligent Agents. *This* Perſon is diſtinct Subſtance, *that* Perſon diſtinct Subſtance, but yet not *Subſtances* but *one Subſtance*: becauſe *Subſtance* and *Subſtance in Union* does not make *Subſtances*. Otherwiſe, upon a Suppoſition that every Being which exiſts is *extended*, there would be no ſuch Thing as a Being ſtrictly *one* in the whole Univerſe: Becauſe every Being which is extended conſiſts of *Subſtance* and *Subſtance*. The Subſtance of God is in *Heaven*, on the *Earth*, pervades the *Sun*, *Moon*, &c. becauſe it *acts* in all thoſe Places. Nothing can *act* where it *is not*; neither can there be any *Power* where there is no *Subſtance*:

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for that would be a powerful *Nothing*. Now the Divine Subſtance pervading the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Earth*, is but *one* Subſtance; juſt as the Three Perſons conſtitute *one* Divine Nature; and yet the *Subſtance* which pervades the *Sun* muſt be *diſtinct*, though not *divided*, from that which pervades the *Earth*; and that which pervades the *Moon* diſtinct from Both; ſo diſtinct, that the *One* is not the *Other*; ſo *diſtinct* as it may be ſaid, Subſtance *here*, and Subſtance *there*.

You ſee then, that the *Unity* of the Divine Subſtance does not neceſſarily exclude *all Diſtinction*. And, even upon a Suppoſition of *Non-Extenſion*, if you allow the Deity to *BE where* He acts; the ſame Method of Reaſoning will take Place, and the ſame Conſequence will follow.

To make the Deity *one Perſon*, the Divine Subſtance muſt be ſuppoſed to be undiſtinguiſhed into *more* intelligent Agents than *one*, having the diſtinctive Characters, *&c.* and that it is thus diſtinguiſhed can never be proved: But to make the Deity *one Subſtance* it is ſufficient, that though there be *this* Subſtance and *that* Subſtance, yet there is no *Diſunion* of *this* from *that*: becauſe we never call any Thing *Subſtances*, except where the Parts are *diſjointed* or *ſeparable*. *Each* Perſon then is Eſſence or Subſtance diſtinguiſhed with appropriate Characters; and *more Perſons* are *more Subſtances*, where the Subſtance is *divided*, and not otherwiſe.

Now to apply this: Try the whole Force of your *Metaphyſicks*, you will never, by any neceſſary Connexion of Ideas, make out, that *this* Subſtance inveſted with diſtinct Properties, Relations, *&c.* may not

not (waving his Right to Puniſhment) make Satisfaction to *that* Subſtance however cloſely united.

If we ſhould ſuppoſe *one* pure immaterial created Subſtance with *two* diſtinct *Conſciouſneſſes*, which, according to Mr. LOCKE, would make *two Perſons*, and whatever elſe is neceſſary (if any thing elſe be neceſſary) to make two Subſiſtences; I do not ſee that it would, in that Caſe, be any Contradiction for the *One* to make Compenſation to the *Other* for an Offence againſt *Both*.

I am ſenſible that I have gone beyond my Line, as well as you. But I think I have a very good Apology to make. If I ſhould ſee a Perſon, for whom I had as great a Regard as one Man can have for another, wading beyond his Depth, and in imminent Danger of ſinking and being loſt; I am excuſeable if I venture after him with a Deſign to reſcue him and bring him ſafe to Land; though my Attempt ſhould be attended with ſome Danger to myſelf.

After all, I think the Doctrine of the *Satisfaction*, in the main, eaſy enough; except it be to Thoſe who *deſire* to know more than they *can*; or *pretend* to know more than they *do*: viz. as I ſaid before, that the *ſecond* Perſon in the Trinity as *truly* ſatisfied the *firſt* Perſon (though after a quite *different* Manner) as the Son of a King reigning jointly with his Father, may ſatisfy his Father for Diſloyalty to Both. It is eaſy enough, I ſay, if we will reſt in Generals. But if we will come to Particulars; if we muſt enter into the *Minutiæ* of it; as, *how* there can be a *triple Diſtinction* of Subſtance in the Deity, and yet not *three* Subſtances, but *one*? and, *how this* diſtinct perſonalized Subſtance made an expiatory Sacrifice

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to *that* Subſtance? What Wonder is it, if *here* we are as much loſt in endleſs Mazes, as we are *whenever* the *Divine Eſſence* is the Subject of our Enquiries. In Matters of ſo high a Sphere, ſufficient to turn the Edge of the acuteſt Wit, and to baffle the Force of the ſtrongeſt Underſtanding, all our *Knowledge* is but acquired Ignorance. We learn to know, that we know little or nothing about the Matter. The

Faciunt næ intelligendo, ut nihil intelligant;

is never more applicable than here; when we are making Excurſions as it were into *Terra Incognita*. But perhaps we have raiſed a Duſt, and then complain we cannot ſee. The Queſtion may be wrong ſtated. Let us try it thus. Vengeance does not belong to God *as the Party offended*; becauſe Puniſhment does not belong to any *Party* as the *Party offended*. For if it did, then every Perſon *as offended* would have a Right to puniſh; and no Perſon that was *not offended* has any Right to puniſh. But the Right of avenging is veſted in God as the ſupreme *Law-giver*; and particularly in the Father, as he is the Fountain-head of the Deity, and ſupreme in Office. The Deity then is not to be conſidered, *in* this Caſe, as the Party *offended*, and at the ſame Time the Party *appeaſing* and *ſatisfying* itſelf, in a *ſtrict*, *literal* Senſe: But the *firſt* Perſon of the Deity is to be conſidered as *appointing*, and the *ſecond* Perſon as *executing*, a *ſatisfactory* Scheme of making his Hatred of Sin conſiſtent with the Forgiveneſs of the Sinner; and conſulting the *Summa Rerum*, at the ſame Time that

that he ſhewed his particular Regard to this Speck of the Creation.

We know not how far *our* State might affect the State of *other* rational Beings in other Parts of the Creation, how far it might countenance a Rebellion, and give Intellectual Beings of an higher Rank diſadvantageous Notions of their ſovereign *Legiſlator*, if a Set of inſignificant Creatures ſhould, after oft-repeated Breaches of his Laws, be admitted to a State of eternal Happineſs without any Puniſhment, *perſonal* or *vicarious*. A Law without Sanction is no binding Law; that is, it is *no* Law at all. Sanctions without One to put them in Execution are *no* Sanctions. If then God has made Laws, has enforced them with Sanctions, he muſt put thoſe Sanctions in Force; at leaſt, they muſt not be ſuch pitiful and ſlender Fences, that any-one may over-leap them as often as he pleaſes, and yet eſcape, upon his Repentance, with Impunity.

We view the Deity then in a wrong Point of Light, when we reflect upon Him as the *Party ſatisfying Himſelf*. We perhaps ſhould rather regard him as the great *Legiſlator* of the whole, himſelf laying and executing a ſtupendous Plan to ſecure the Honour of his Laws, and the Authority of his Government: a Plan ſo extraordinary and amazing, that no Set of *Spiritual* Beings ſhould, upon any Temptation to a Revolt, have any Reaſon to expect the like Favour; and ſo ſufficient as to leave no Room for Cavil; at leaſt to thoſe enlightened Beings, who ſee farther than the mere Shell and Surface of it.

If, becauſe we do not ſee the whole Compages of Divine Providence, but only ſome Parts of it detached

tached from the reſt, we are unable to judge of the *ordinary* Steps of the Divine Conduct, we muſt be far more incompetent Judges of the extraordinary Meaſures which he takes. But I need not dwell upon this. You will readily own, that we no more are able to know what God ſhould *do* with Regard to the whole Creation, than we are able to *know* the whole Creation. I ſhall only obſerve farther, that ſome Men have dealt with *Providence*, as others do with the *Scriptures*; who pick out ſome looſe, diſjointed Sentences, which, by *themſelves* and *independently* of the reſt, look unpromiſing and unaccountable; but are yet very proper and beautiful when we conſider the *whole* Thread, Contexture and *Dependence* of one Thing upon another. But this is foreign to the Queſtion.

I proceed to your next Objection, *viz.* "that if "the Godhead did not ſuffer, then Chriſt is dead in "vain." I have not put down your *Dilemma*; becauſe I have already granted the firſt Part of it. And as to the ſecond Part of it, I dare not determine, till I have had more Leiſure to examine, whether our Saviour's Sacrifice was *infinitely* meritorious. It is enough at preſent to ſay, that it was ſo *far* meritorious, as to anſwer the Ends of God's All-wiſe Government; and to fulfil the Terms which the Almighty's manifold Wiſdom, unalterable Juſtice, and eſſential Holineſs required. That our Saviour could not merit *ſo far*, by an inimitable Original of diſintereſted Love and inconceivable Goodneſs, in aſſuming human Nature; in letting that Nature, thus endeared to him by a moſt intimate Conjunction, be expoſed to Variety of Inſults and Outrages; in dignifying

nifying that Nature by a ſtrict and vital Union; in advancing it to a ſinleſs Perfection, and then offering it up without Spot or Blemiſh; That he could not merit *thus far*, I ſay, it is incumbent upon you to deduce *à priori* from *intrinſic* Evidence. We imagine, that ſince God muſt make a *Diſtinction*, where there is a *Difference*; ſince there is a *Difference* between the Angels that ſinned not, and Men who all have ſinned and *fallen ſhort of the Glory of God*; *We* could not have been entitled to the Happineſs of the Angels, or made ἰσάγγελοι (equal to the Angels that kept their firſt Station) unleſs the Merits of our Saviour had been placed to our Account.

Be that as it will, this is certain; that Repentance in itſelf, *intrinſically* conſidered, cannot be ſo acceptable to God as *unſinning* Obedience; and therefore there *muſt* be ſomething *extrinſic* to make it ſo. Here then you ſee the *Neceſſity* of a Satisfaction, which in one Place, I think, you queſtion.

But you can no more demonſtrate that the *Fulneſs of the Godhead, which dwelt in our Saviour bodily* (the Human Nature being aſſumed into a ſtrict Perſonality with the Divine) *could* not dignify and exalt his human Nature, as to ſinleſs Perfection, ſo to ſuch an uncommon Degree of Merit, as to make it ſufficient to atone for us; this, I ſay, you can no more demonſtrate, than you can demonſtrate the utmoſt *Extent* of the Divine Power, which was veſted in *God, manifeſted in the Fleſh*; or ſhew the *Manner* of the Perſonal Union.

It is allowed by you, and it is very eaſy to make it out, that no *created* Being can *merit*: ſince if ſuch a Being undertook this Province *without Appointment*,

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it must have been the Height of Presumption, to have imagined that any Thing He could have done, (which must, as you well express it, *have been disproportionate to the Favours received,*) could have been an Equivalent for the Sins of a whole World; if such a Being *was appointed*, it would have been made His strict and indispensable Duty. Every Creature shines with borrowed Light, with Merit not his own; that is, with no Merit at all. Creatures have nothing independent of their Creator.

But this was not the Case as to our Saviour. He being not a *mere* Creature could, out of his *own peculiar Fund*, discharge our Debt. He had an *independent* Power over his *Human* Nature. He *had Power to lay it down, and Power to take it up.* You see then the Process. Some *Merit* was required to render our Repentance, what it could not be in itself, *as acceptable* to God *as unsinning Obedience.*—— No mere Creature *could* merit, as having nothing of it's own —— The *Word made Flesh* might merit ——

The Doctrine of the *Satisfaction* and Merits of our Saviour is clogged indeed with *Difficulties*; but it does not imply a *Contradiction*——since it can never be disproved, but that there is as much Consistence between the *Unity* of the *Substance*, and a *threefold Distinction* of *Persons*; as there is (upon the Supposition of *Extension* of the Godhead) between the *Unity* of *Substance*, and yet a Substance *here*, as in the Earth; and a Substance *there*, as in the Sun.——There is therefore as real and substantial a *Distinction* of the *three* Persons in the *Divinity*, as there is of *three* Persons among *Men*, though after a quite different

Manner —— And therefore *one* Perſon in the Deity might as truly atone to *another*, though after a quite different Manner, as *one* Man may ſatisfy *another* for a third —— The General Notion then of this Doctrine is eaſy and plain; but the Particularities and *Minutiæ* of it are, perhaps, as perplexing, as thoſe of the *Modus* of the Divine *Omnipreſence*, *Eternity*, *Preſcience*, &c. Juſt as a blind Man may have a *general* confuſed Idea of Colour; namely, that it is a Senſation occaſioned by ſome ſubtle Matter, which, acting on the Eye, communicates it's Motion to the Optick Nerves: and from thence is propagated to the Brain; where it cauſes different Impreſſions. And he may *believe* there is ſuch a Senſation upon *Teſtimony*: But he cannot *frame* any *diſtinct particular* Idea about it that is not big with Abſurdities.

—I have over-looked ſome Things in your ſecond Objection; and nothing, but a Regard for whatever comes from *you*, could induce me to conſider your third, which is as follows: "That if God the Son "offered to make the Atonement, and the Sacrifice "of himſelf was a Satisfaction commenſurate to the "Demerit committed, then it was not *Mercy* but "*Juſtice* in God to accept of this *adequate* Satisfac-"tion." If both your Premiſes were true (which is not the Caſe) yet your Inference is wrong. Becauſe God needed not to have accepted any Satisfaction, adequate or inadequate, except upon a *Suppoſition* of *His own Appointment*. For the *Guilt* being *our's*, he might have inſiſted, that the *Puniſhment* ſhould be *our's* too. But how do you reconcile your firſt Propoſition with this Text? *God ſo loved the World*,

that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. God's *Mercy* (the Riches of his Mercy) was then ſufficiently ſhewn in *appointing* the *Satisfaction*; His *Wiſdom* in *contriving* it, and His *Juſtice* in *not accepting* Mankind without it. Thus all His Attributes act in Concert.

Your laſt Objection runs thus: "That if *Eternal* "*Miſery* be the appointed *Puniſhment* of Faults, "committed under the *Influence* of an imperfect "Nature; you do not ſee but *Eternal Happineſs* "may, *as juſtly*, be the appointed *Reward* of a *ge*-"*neral Tenour* of Compliance with Duty, in Oppo-"ſition to the Tendency of an imperfect Nature bi-"aſſing to the other Side."

Now in Anſwer to this; not to tire you and myſelf with the Doctrine of *Merit* and *Demerit*; as, that our beſt Actions are but what we *ought* to do, and conſequently have *no Merit*; but our bad Actions, being what we *ought not* to do, *deſerve Vengeance*; that, though we ought to be *puniſhed* for *not* paying our *Dues*, it does not follow, that we have a *Claim* to a *Reward* for *paying* them; not to mention, that the *Grace of God* has a great Share in *enabling* us to *live well*: To paſs all this over, I beg Leave to obſerve, that you have miſtaken the Point. I do not know that the Scripture aſſerts, or that any one affirms, that *Eternal* Puniſhment (I lay the Streſs upon *Eternal*) is the Puniſhment merely for our *Faults*, but for our *Impenitency* under them. You will not ſay, that becauſe *Impenitency* incurs *Eternal Damnation*, therefore our *Repentance*, in *all* Caſes, entitles us to *Eternal Salvation*: yet this you ſhould make out, in order to prove a *Satisfaction needleſs*.

This would be to aſſert, that becauſe an obſtinate, *unrelenting* Rebel deſerves Capital Puniſhment, therefore his *repenting* Aſſociate, who has deſerved all he has from the Bounty of his Prince, (but yet has been ſeduced through Weakneſs) ſhould, after repeated Breaches of his Allegiance, be advanced to ſome diſtinguiſhed Poſt of Honour. Farther; I know not what you mean by the *general Tenour of Compliance with our Duty*, if you take *all* our *Thoughts* into the Account, and all our *Sins* of Omiſſion.

I believe there are few or none, but who would rather die, than have their *Poſtſcenia Vitæ* (what is done behind the Scenes within their own Breaſts) their vain wicked Thoughts, laid open and expoſed to the View of the whole World. I do not know ſo worthy a Gentleman as yourſelf, of your Age; ſo very virtuous as well as ingenious, (I ſpeak without Flattery) and yet, turn your Thoughts inwards, and tell me, whether you are conſcious to yourſelf of ſuch an exalted Worth, as might qualify you to dwell with God, and converſe with Angels; though I have ſome in my Eye, who ſeem not intirely unqualified to be the worthy Aſſociates of evil Spirits.

I have declined entering into the *Merits* of this Cauſe, becauſe the Subject of *Repentance* has, I think, been exhauſted of late; and I have nothing to ſay, but what you muſt have ſeen ſet forth in a more forcible, and at the ſame Time in a more agreeable Manner, that I can pretend to.

Your Preface, with which you uſher in your Objections, ſeems to contain ſome latent Poiſon, though conveyed in an artful and agreeable Vehicle. I beg your Pardon if I miſtake you: but by the Concluſion

of

of it one would think, you were going to ſet aſide what you do *clearly* underſtand, *viz.* the Arguments from *Miracles*, *Doctrines*, *Prophecies*, (the main Contexture and Deſign of Chriſtianity) on the Account of ſomething which you *cannot fully* underſtand, *viz.* the *Doctrine* of the *Satisfaction*. "It is impoſſible," you ſay, "that Chriſtianity ſhould be true, if what "relates to this Point in the *Scriptures*," (*N. B.* theſe are your Words) "appears to be abſurd."

To this I anſwer; that it is *morally impoſſible* we ſhould err in judging Chriſtianity to be true, ſince the *Proofs* are ſo numerous, ſtrong and deciſive; and lie *level* to our Apprehenſions and Capacities: but we may very probably be miſtaken in fancying That to be abſurd, which relates to the *Eſſence* and *Nature* of the Deity; a Myſtery *which even the Angels deſire to look into*; and where there is an *infinite* Diſproportion between the Object and the Faculty. If there be any *Criterion* of Truth, if we are not neceſſarily liable to be deceived in judging of Matters confeſſedly within the Sphere of our Reaſon, we may ſafely conclude, that what has all the diſtinctive Characters of Truth (all that any ancient Records and Matters of Fact can have) cannot be a Forgery or an Impoſture. But we can never be ſure but that, in Matters of ſo high and elevated a Nature, what *appears* to us to be contradictory to Reaſon, may *not* be a Contradiction in *itſelf*, but only the Effect of human Ignorance. One Proof from a Matter of Fact weighs more with me to confirm a myſterious Doctrine, than all the ideal and metaphyſical Arguments (though dignified with the pompous Name of Demonſtration) do to diſprove it: Becauſe

I take myſelf to be a competent Judge of the Truth of *Fact*.

But there are, no Doubt, ſeveral intermediate Ideas, and more enlarged Views (neceſſarily wanting to me) which yet ought to be taken into the Account to reconcile ſeeming Repugnances, and to make our Reaſoning *exact* concerning myſterious Doctrines. This I take to be the Reaſon why the *Divine Preſcience* and our *Free-will* are irreconcileable; I ſhould ſay, *appear to us* to be irreconcileable; for, no Doubt, they are perfectly conſiſtent in themſelves.

I beg your Pardon for treſpaſſing upon your Patience with a long, tedious Letter; where you muſt expect many Repetitions and great Confuſion of Thought. In a Situation where a Perſon meets with many Interruptions and Avocations, it is impoſſible he ſhould purſue one continued Chain of Reaſoning. I need not make any Apology for my Style. For, though this Letter, if it were to appear abroad, ought to have been dreſſed out to Advantage, yet it may be permitted to wait upon a Friend in an Undreſs and *Deſhabillé* of Thought. If I have ſaid any Thing that may contribute to ſatisfy you, I ſhall be glad of it. But if not, I had rather you ſhould call in Queſtion my *Abilities* to ſerve you, than my hearty and ſincere *Inclination* to ſhew you how much I am, at all Times,

Your intirely-affectionate Friend,

From the School
at Richmond.

JER. SEED.

POSTSCRIPT.

In the Body of my Letter I have ſaid, "that the "Right of puniſhing was veſted in God as the ſove-"reign *Lawgiver* of the Whole, who could not con-"ſiſtently with the common Good of the Whole, "for ought we can prove, have remitted the *Puniſh-"ment* without a *Satisfaction*." This you will ſcarce be able to diſprove. Why might not then our Saviour *ſatisfy* to God the Father, conſidered in *this Capacity?* You will anſwer; that if God was the ſupreme *Lawgiver*, and our Saviour God, then the ſupreme *Lawgiver ſatisfied* to the ſupreme *Lawgiver*. But what if our Saviour might be *truly* God, (*i. e.* ennobled with all the *Eſſential* Perfections of the Godhead) at the ſame Time that he diveſted himſelf of the *Capacity* of a *Lawgiver*; I mean, during the Time that he was tranſacting the gracious Scheme of our Redemption? For to be the ſovereign *Lawgiver* is no *eſſential* Perfection of the Deity——If it were He could never have been without it. He muſt have been *Lawgiver ab æterno:* that is, He muſt have been *Lawgiver* when there were no Beings to give Laws to. It is plain then, that to be ſovereign *Lawgiver* is no *eſſential* Perfection of the Deity, but only a *relative* Property.

This ſeems to overturn your main Argument, *that the Divine Nature ſatisfied itſelf*. For if God did not require Satisfaction, *as veſted with the Divine Nature*, or, *as God*, but as the ſupreme *Lawgiver*; then your Argument, to have been valid, ought to have run thus: that *the ſupreme Lawgiver ſatisfied the ſupreme*

Lawgiver: which, I have ſhewn, was not the Caſe.

To be *Lawgiver*, then, is no Perfection *eſſential* to the Nature of the Deity. Conſequently our Saviour, ſtill retaining the *eſſential Properties* of the Godhead, might put off the Character of *Lawgiver*, conſequently *needed* no Satisfaction himſelf, and ſo might ſatisfy the Father, in whom *that* Character was lodged. The reſt your own Thoughts will ſupply.

The Second LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER having attempted to ſhew, that you had proved no abſolute *Impoſſibility* in the Doctrine of the *Satisfaction*, my Intention was to caution you againſt miſtaking *Difficulties* for *Impoſſibilities*, and letting your Thoughts ſally out out into Matters where you could have no Sure Footing. My Caution was well meant. I was afraid the *Diſputer of this World* would get the better of the *Chriſtian*. If my Fears were ill-grounded, pardon my Miſtake, and accept of my good Deſign. Though No-body can have an higher Opinion of your diſtinguiſhed Abilities and diſintereſted Love of Truth; yet I conſidered, that an Affectation of *being wiſe above what was written* in the deep Things of God,

and

and of puſhing our Inquiries beyond our Capacities, had miſled the ableſt Writers, down from CARTESIUS and MALEBRANCHE to NEWTON, CLARKE, &c. into almoſt as great Abſurdities, as an implicit Acquieſcence in the common received Notions of their Country has betrayed the unthinking Vulgar. There is a *ſpeculative* Fool-hardineſs, a metaphyſical *Quixotiſm* in Men of very great but enterprizing Geniuſes, which prompts them to grapple with Objects, to which every judicious By-ſtander ſees their Strength to be vaſtly unequal.

Notwithſtanding all your Art and *Fineſſe*, your Propoſition, which I excepted to, will not, I doubt, admit of thoſe Softenings, with which you would qualify it's Harſhneſs. "I muſt own it," you ſay, "to be my firm Perſuaſion, that it is impoſſible "Chriſtianity ſhould be true, if what relates to *this* "Point in the Scripture *appears* to be abſurd." Relates to *what* Point, I beſeech you, Sir? Why? To a Point to which our Faculties are not ſuited, *viz. How the Divine Nature could ſatisfy itſelf*. Your Senſe is confined, by your own Words, to Points too ſublime for human Comprehenſion, and reſolves into this Propoſition: "In Matters wherein (becauſe "they bear no Proportion to our Faculties) we can- "not diſtinctly *perceive* a Doctrine to be abſurd, we "ought to diſcard *that* Doctrine, if it have but the "*Appearance* of an Abſurdity."——By what *appears to be abſurd*, muſt be underſtood, either what we evidently *perceive* to be a Falſhood, or what we only *conceive* to be ſo. If the former; it is true, that *evident Perception* neceſſarily extorts our Aſſent; but this is foreign to your Purpoſe *here*. Indeed you explain

plain yourſelf in that Senſe, but the Subject we are upon muſt exclude that Meaning. For ſince our Ideas of the *intrinſic* Nature of God, the *Unity* and *Diſtinction* of that Nature, are very obſcure, ſhort, and indiſtinct; ſince our Knowledge can riſe no higher than our Ideas; we never can have any *certain*, *clear*, and *diſtinct* Knowledge, where all our Ideas are *obſcure* and *indiſtinct*.

The latter Senſe of your Expreſſion, *viz. what appears to be abſurd*, you will not contend for: it is plain from numerous Inſtances, that we may *conceive*, or (if you will give me Leave to uſe an Expreſſion ſo highly obnoxious to you) *fancy* a thouſand Things to be abſurd which are not ſo. We may form precipitate Judgments (the main Source of Error) without diſtinct *Perception*. We may go before the Light, inſtead of following it. If then you have clear and diſtinct Ideas of the unfathomable Depths of the Divine Nature, which produce diſtinct Knowledge in you; though they muſt be your own peculiar Property, yet be ſo generous as to impart them to a Friend. But if you have not; do not complain that I *took Advantage of the Inaccuracy of your Expreſſion*; but fairly confeſs, that your Words either meant nothing at all, or muſt mean your *conceiving* a Thing to be *abſurd* from your very *indiſtinct* Notices.

That you may not think my *Scheme of Arguing* would *overturn all Science at once, and end in univerſal Scepticiſm*; I grant, that though two Ideas are in the main obſcure, yet they may be *ſo far* diſtinct, as that we may diſcern the *one* not to be the *other*; either by immediate Intuition, (as I may know a *Pine-apple* not to be a *Pomegranate*, though I have a very

very faint Idea of Both) or by the Intervention of one Idea or more which are clear and diſtinct.

Let us examine theſe two Propoſitions, the one *Lactantius*'s; the other, in Subſtance, your's. *The Divine Nature created itſelf. The Divine Nature, conſiſting of Three Perſons, could not ſatisfy itſelf.* As to the former, if it be taken in a ſtrict Philoſophical Senſe, there is a glaring *Contradiction* in it. "The "Divine Nature not exiſting —— could not act be- "fore it was —— could not therefore create itſelf." Here though the *two* Ideas, the *Divine Nature* and *Creation*, are very obſcure and indiſtinct; yet we perceive a manifeſt Repugnancy in the Aſſertion of *Lactantius*, by the Intermediation of a third Propoſition, which reſolves itſelf into an Identical one—— "Nothing can act before it is——Nothing can have "no Properties, otherwiſe it muſt be ſomething—— "*i. e.* Nothing is Nothing." Thus, though our Ideas of the Deity —— *Eternity* of the Deity —— *Omnipreſence*, &c. be very confuſed, yet we prove the *Exiſtence* of the Deity, and the *Exiſtence* of theſe his Attributes by the Help of intermediate Ideas that are diſtinct, and lye *level* to our Capacities: Nay, we find them neceſſarily connected with Axioms that cannot be controverted.

Here then all appears in broad Day-light. But if we turn to your Propoſition: "No Light, but ra- "ther Darkneſs viſible." Take it thus: *Three in- "telligent Agents——Their Nature one and the ſame ——One cannot ſatisfy the other.* Here, your middle Term, *viz.* the *Divine Nature is one and the ſame*, which ſhould give Light to the two Extremes, and make them amicably correſpond, calls for the friendly

Efforts

Efforts of ſome metaphyſical Heroe, to reſcue it from that impenetrable Obſcurity in which it is at preſent involved. And if that Term which ſhould be the *Light* in your Argument, is *Darkneſs*, *how great muſt that Darkneſs be?* You ſhould prove, that the Unity of the Divine Nature muſt be either *too cloſe* to admit of *diſtinct* Actions, ſuch as *giving* and *receiving* Satisfaction; or elſe *too looſe* to make *three* Perſons *one* God. You ſhould demonſtrate, that, either the *Diſtinction* of the Divine Nature cannot be *wide enough* to anſwer the *diſtinct Offices* before mentioned; or that it will not be *ſtrict enough* to make the three *intelligent Agents one Deity*: And then it would follow, that, becauſe the Divine Nature is *one* and the *ſame*, *one* intelligent Agent cannot ſatisfy the *other*. The *Manner* of the *Divine Unity* is as incomprehenſible as His *Eſſence*; and the Ideas we endeavour to frame of it are too lame, inadequate and confuſed to beget any *certain* and *full* Knowledge; which muſt always keep Pace with our Ideas.

In your ſecond Page, having an inexhauſtible Magazine of Thoughts, and Plenty of Ammunition, you are diſcharging your Artillery into the Air, without levelling directly at me, or defending yourſelf. Pleaſe to remember, that your Senſe is aſcertained by the Subject you are upon.

To *appear*, and to *be* reaſonable, is the ſame Thing to Us, *where* we evidently *perceive* a Truth. But where we only *conceive* a Thing to be true, we may ſuſpend our Judgment.

After having explained your Words in a Senſe which they will not bear, you make an Attempt to diſprove

diſprove ſome inoffenſive Expreſſions at the Cloſe of my Letter. I need not repeat them; your Anſwer is as follows:

If, ſay you, *a Man of Senſe and Impartiality can bring himſelf to fancy That to be abſurd, which in itſelf is not ſo*, (viz. what relates to the Nature and Eſſence of the Deity, where there is an infinite Diſproportion between the Object and the Faculty) *he may as well fancy Truth, where there is none*——upon the ſame infinite Object ——

When I firſt conſidered this Sentence, I was at a Loſs for a conſiderable Time to know, why you inſerted the Words, *A Man of Senſe and Impartiality*. I looked upon them as *idle Terms*, which had no Buſineſs here; and was going to diſmiſs them, as impertinent Intruders. But conſidering, that my Letter was directed to *you*, I find that you had a Mind to bring me under a *Dilemma*; either of giving *you* up *as a Man of Senſe* and *Impartiality*; or, owning that Men of *Senſe* and *Impartiality* may fancy Abſurdities and Truth where there are none. What muſt I do to extricate myſelf? Give *you* up as a *Man of Senſe* and *Impartiality*? No, by no Means; if my Caſe were deſperate: becauſe I have repeated, numerous, deciſive Proofs of your Senſe and Impartiality. No other Reſource is then left: I muſt be ſo ſanguine as to affirm, that Men of impartial Senſe may vent ſeveral Crudities. For a Proof of which I refer you to MOOR, RAPHSON, Doctor CLARKE, *cum multis aliis*; the two former maintaining, that GOD was *Infinite Space*; the laſt, that HE was the *Subſtratum* of *Infinite Space*, or an *Infinite Vacuum*. Nay, the *Doctor* conceived (or *fancied*) that he had *intuitive* Certainty

Certainty of it. For He ſays, *it was as plain to him, as that two and two make four.* But you proceed —— *He may fancy the Proofs of Chriſtianity to be ſtrong, numerous and deciſive,* and a little lower, *to lie level to his Capacity, when they in Reality are not ſo* (I ſuppoſe you mean) to *him.* He may *fancy ſo,* if he pleaſes: But, if he will attend to the Proofs, he may *do more* than fancy. He may have a *Certainty,* that he muſt either *diſbelieve* every Thing he does not ſee; or, *believe* Chriſtianity to be true: Chriſtianity having all the Proofs that *any* Matter of Fact has, and ſeveral additional diſtinguiſhing Proofs which *no other* has.

The Truth of the Caſe is this: Our Proſpect is bounded by a very narrow Horizon; our Faculties are limited within a very confined Sphere of Activity. *Within* That Sphere the Proof of Matters of Fact, if any Thing, lies; and *within* that Sphere Things in the main are eaſy and obvious. *Beyond* it all, except ſome few negative, undeterminate Ideas, is an immenſe Blank to us; and *beyond* it, if any Thing, the *internal Manner* of the Divine Exiſtence, and the *Kind* of the *Unity* and *Diſtinction* in the tremendous Deity, upon which the Doctrine of the Satisfaction depends, is infinitely removed. Here our Ignorance may *occaſion* us to *conceive* (for Ignorance does not *beget* Perception) imaginary Abſurdities and appearing Inconſiſtencies: either becauſe we have no *direct, proper, original* Ideas; Ideas *immediately* derived from the Things themſelves, (which ſingle Conſideration will be an inſuperable Bar to all Pretenſions of a *Demonſtration againſt* this Doctrine)

or

or becauſe our Capacities are not able to take in the whole Extent of this Subject.

Demonſtration being excluded, you know our Concluſions muſt be the *Sum total* of our Reaſoning. And as a Sum can never be exactly ſtated, when any Particulars, which ſhould be taken into the Account, are dropt; no more can the Sum total of our Reaſoning be juſt, when any intermediate Ideas are wanting. And what other intermediate Ideas ſuperior Intelligences may have, which have other Inlets of Knowledge, we cannot tell. You tell me, *you think you perceive an Abſurdity in it:* ſo did Doctor CLARKE *think* he had *demonſtrated*, that *Infinite Space* (or *Emptineſs*) was a *Property* of the Deity. The *Manner* of the *Divine Subſiſtence* being placed beyond the Boundaries of *clear* and *diſtinct* Perception; and the Doctrine of the *Satisfaction* having an immediate Connexion with it, you cannot *perceive* an Abſurdity in the *latter* without *perceiving* the former. If we will not ſtop, where it becomes us, both you and I may *imagine* we *perceive* Abſurdities: and I know no Remedy for it. But, —— *is not THIS to plunge us into Scepticiſm*: No: becauſe we ſee a plain Reaſon *à priori*, why Creatures, who can hardly *gueſs a-right* at Things before them, ſhould not irreverently, from the *abſtract Nature* and *Reaſon of the Thing* (of which they know little or nothing) paſs a deciſive Judgment upon the *deep Things* of God; humbly content to *ſee through a Glaſs darkly*, till the Time comes when they can ſee *Face to Face*: and judging, that in ſuch Points Human *Reaſon* is but Human *Conjecture*. But we *cannot* ſee a Reaſon either *à priori*, or *à poſteriori*, why we ought not to judge

judge of plain Matter of Fact, and the Proofs of God's Exiſtence.

This is the chief Stand we can make againſt *Atheiſm*. The Partitions, you know, between *Deiſm* and *Atheiſm* are very thin, and the Tranſition from the one to the other eaſy and inſenſible. A Perſon, that is an Half-Thinker, may ſtop at Half-way. But he who will be at any Expence of Thought, muſt ſee, that for the very *ſame* Reaſons, for which he *diſbelieves* the *Three Perſons* in the Godhead, and the *Redemption*; he ſhould, if conſiſtent with himſelf, *diſbelieve* the *One* God and the *Creation*. There is ſuch a mutual Harmony and Correſpondence in the Compages of Truths, that, if *one* Member *ſuffers*, *all* the Members ſuffer with it; and, if one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it.

Pray, Sir, what do you think of the *Divine Omnipreſence*? If the Deity is *unextended*, He cannot be *ſubſtantially* preſent *here*, *there*, *every-where*; (except you will ſay, that He is in *ubi*, but not *in loco*; *every-where*, but *in no Place*) and where there is no *Subſtance*, there can be no *Virtue*, or *Power of acting*. Well then; is He *extended*? But can you conſider a Being of infinite Wiſdom, *&c.* under the groſs Idea of *Length*, *Breadth* and *Height*? At that Rate we might properly ſay, a Foot, or Yard of the Deity; and if *eſſential* Attributes are co-extended with an *extended* Subject, a Foot or Yard of Wiſdom, *&c.*

If eſſential Attributes are not co-extended with the Subject, then the whole Divine Wiſdom will be in that Subſtance, which fills Heaven, and yet the whole in that which fills Earth, and ſo on: the

whole

whole in the whole, and whole in every Part. Do not you think you ſee a Contradiction here? Again, the Notion of *Eternity*, whether you admit the eternal *Succeſſion*, or the eternal *Now*, labours under a Complication of *appearing* (I was going to ſay, for it is all one with you, *real*) Abſurdities. The latter is a Contradiction in Terms; and for the former, ſee the Eighth Vol. of *Spectators*, BENTLEY's *Boylean* Lectures, and COLLIBER's *Enquiry*. To clear up my Notions about *apparent* and *real* Contradictions, I mentioned, in my former Letter, the ſeeming Repugnancy between *Preſcience* in God and *Free-will* in Man; of which you take no Notice. You like not my Diſtinction between *real* and *apparent*; and you dare not be ſo irreverent as to aſſert, there is a *real* Contradiction between that Power in God and that Faculty in Man; and yet you cannot prove but there is a *ſeeming* one between them. Does it not *ſeem* to imply a Contradiction, that God ſhould *infallibly* foreknow *Contingents*; that He ſhould certainly foreſee *uncertain* Events? Be pleaſed then to put the Doctrine of the *Trinity* and *Satisfaction* (two Doctrines nearly allied) upon the ſame Foot of Favour with *Omnipreſence*, *Eternity*, *Preſcience*, &c. or, to be of a piece, reject them all alike.

All that I can ſay is, as before. That though we cannot punctually adjuſt the Boundaries between Knowledge and Ignorance, and preciſely determine where the one ends, and the other begins; yet we ſee in general, that there is a determinate Province for our Reaſon to expatiate in: *Within* the Verge of which the Proofs of the *Attributes*, *Revelation* and *Redemption* conſiſt. But when we would

enlarge the Scene of our Knowledge *beyond* That, we take a mighty and deſperate Leap into the Dark: where numerous, unſubſtantial Phantoms and *Apparitions* of Abſurdities (which we think ſtand *confeſt* and *manifeſt* to our View) diſturb our Brain, and unhinge our labouring Faculties.

But enough of this.——I beg Leave to wave the Conſideration of your next Topick till I have diſpatched what ſeems to me *more* material. I will not knowingly leave any Part of your Letter that affects *me* unanſwered, except the handſome Things you are pleaſed to interſperſe, which are indeed unanſwerable by me. Let who will get the better in Point of Argument, you will gain the Conqueſt (a much nobler Conqueſt!) in Good-Breeding, Civility, and your endearing Manner of treating me. The weakeſt Things you ſay in your Letter are, when (an amiable Weakneſs!) your Friendſhip biaſſes your Judgment in Favour of me.

You ſay; that if *the Divine Nature be ſtrictly One, a Satisfaction made by the Divine Nature to the Divine Nature, muſt be a Satisfaction made by the Deity to Himſelf.* You either mean, that where there are *three intelligent Agents* in the ſame Nature, yet one cannot ſatisfy the other, becauſe their Nature is *ſtrictly* without *Diſtinction*, *one*; or I do not underſtand you. For it is no more proper to ſay the Divine Nature ſatisfied the Divine Nature, than it is to ſay, that the Human Nature in ſuch a *Sufferer*, ſatisfied the Human Nature of the *Lawgiver*. And I do not know but ſome acute Perſons may think it as much a Contradiction for the ſame *ſpecifical* Nature to ſatisfy, as it is for the ſame *numerical* Nature to ſatisfy, itſelf.

itſelf. And ſome, acuter ſtill, may imagine it no Contradiction for the *ſame* Perſon to ſatisfy *himſelf*, and exemplify what they lay down by the Caſe of *Zaleucus*, King of the *Locrians*; who parted with one of his Eyes to ſave one of his Son's. Here, this abſolute Monarch, to ſecure the Honour of his own Laws, and to ſhew his Deteſtation of Adultery, as the Party *ſuffering gave*, and at the ſame Time as the ſupreme *Lawgiver received* Satisfaction; and exemplified at once the affectionate Tenderneſs of the *Father*, and inflexible Juſtice of the *Legiſlator* in diſcouraging Vice.

You ſay, "*This Perſon cannot ſatisfy That, be-*
"*cauſe the Nature or Eſſence is one and the ſame.*" I have anſwered this already in the former Part of my Letter, and I lay ſome Streſs on what I have there laid down. I add here,——That, for ought you can prove, the *Eſſence* may be *one* and *the ſame*, becauſe it is *indiſcerpible* or indiviſible —— Indiſcerpibility is no Bar to *Diſtinction* —— What is no Bar to Diſtinction, can be none to *diſtinct* Actions —— Therefore the Father and the Son may act *diſtinctly* in reſpectively *giving* and *receiving* Satisfaction. I own I am ſo dull of Apprehenſion, that I cannot diſcern any Flaw in the Argument, or where the Chain breaks. That Indiſcerpibility of Parts, or *indiſſoluble Union*, may conſtitute *Unity* is plain to me; or elſe, upon the Suppoſition that every Being is extended, there will be no ſuch Thing as *one* Being in the World—— The Divine Subſtance infinitely expanded —— This Part Being, that Part Being, or elſe it will be nothing, (There being no Medium between Being and not Being:) and yet in the Whole One Being; be-

cauſe the Parts are inſeparably united. That *Conſciouſneſs* does not conſtitute Unity, ſhall be proved by and by——

That *Indiſcerpibility*, or indiſſoluble Union of Parts (which either conſtitutes Unity, or we do not know what does) is no Bar to Diſtinction and diſtinct Actions, is evident from hence; that this Subſtance or Being, which invigorates and actuates the Earth, acts diſtinctly from *that* which pervades the fixed Stars: invigorating the Earth, being a diſtinct Action from pervading the fixed Stars. But more of this, when I come to anſwer your Objections againſt the Catholic Doctrine; after having confuted the novel Scheme which you would build upon the Ruins of it, *viz.* That *there are three diſtinct intelligent Subſtances or Divine Beings*, each *infinite* in all Reſpects; but *their Subſtance and Manner of Exiſtence rather* ſimilar *or* uniform, *than* united. Before I proceed, give me Leave to aſk you, why you would ſend abroad an Hypotheſis, a forlorn unfriended Infant, without any Thing to *ſupport* or *maintain* it, either from Scripture, or Reaſon?

To make ſome Strictures upon it——

Firſt, It is contrary to Scripture: *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord (Jehovah) your God is one Lord:* one *Jehovah*, or neceſſarily exiſting Subſtance; one τὸ ὄν for that, you know, is the Import of the Word *Jehovah* —— It is likewiſe, *Secondly*, contrary to Reaſon to multiply Beings without Neceſſity. You have no Ground to ſuppoſe *three* infinite Subſtances; and conſequently it is a groundleſs Suppoſition. *Thirdly*, Either theſe *three* infinite Beings are *divided* from one another, or not; If they be *divided*, they cannot *all* be

be infinite. For where-ever one is ſeparated from the other, there the one muſt ceaſe to *be*, (which is contrary to the Suppoſition of Infinity) and the other continue to be expanded. There can be no *Separation* where there is no *Chaſm*, and where there is a *Chaſm* there can be *no Infinity*.

If they be *undivided*, your Scheme (like a Comet making ſo near Approaches to the Sun, that at laſt it is loſt and abſorpt in it) muſt co-incide with our's; which is, neither to *confound the Perſons*, *nor to divide the Subſtance*. For tell me any Reaſon, why any *one* of your three infinite Subſtances ſhould be, ſtrictly ſpeaking, *one*; and I will tell you, why all *three*, each inſeparate and inſeparable, become *one*. The ſame indiſcerpible Continuity, that makes an infinite Variety of Parts (each Part a Being) *one* Being in the whole, will make your ſuppoſed *three* Beings to become ſo too. There is the ſame Cauſe, conſequently the ſame Effect. Either *not any* of your *three* Beings will be *one*, becauſe each conſiſts of *diſtinct* and *diſtant* Parts; or, upon the ſame Grounds, by an intimate Mixture and In-dwelling, without any poſſible Detachment of *this* from *that*, they all *three* will coaleſce into *one*. Either *not any* of them will be more than *uniformly* and *ſimilarly one*, or all three will be *united*. You will here retreat to your impregnable Fortreſs *Conſciouſneſs*: You will ſay, that *two diſtinct Conſciouſneſſes* will make two diſtinct Beings; that *Egoity*, or *Unity*, or *Identity depends upon your Conſciouſneſs*, which makes *you* (mirabile dictu!) *one Being*, *though you are not one Subſtance*. The ſame you ſay immediately after concerning the Deity. That is, you have inveſted *Conſciouſneſs* with a Power

of working Contradictions. For Subſtance muſt *be*, or not *be*, it muſt be a *Being*, or *Nothing*; unleſs *Conſciouſneſs* can make a Thing *to be*, and not *to be*, at the ſame Time. Conſequently, *two* diſtinct Subſtances, in Defiance of *Self-Conſciouſneſs*, and all it's wonder-working Magick, muſt remain *two* diſtinct Beings. You needed not then to have found Fault with me for changing the Terms, where I retained the ſame Idea: Being and Being in Union (inſeparable Union) do not make Beings, or elſe there will be no ſuch Thing in the World as one Being, of which we have any Notion. Becauſe every Being, of which we have any Notion, is Being and Being in Union: This Part Being, that Part Being, and yet one Being in the whole.

To come more cloſely to the Point: *You* are *one* Being, it ſeems, becauſe you have *one Conſciouſneſs*; and your three diſtinct Subſtances, you will ſay, are three diſtinct Beings, becauſe they have three diſtinct *Conſciouſneſſes*; the *Egoity*, *Identity*, *and Unity depending upon Conſciouſneſs*. *Conſciouſneſs* then, in your Opinion, is the Ground of Unity, but what is the Ground of *Conſciouſneſs?* The Tortoiſe ſupported the Elephant; but what ſupported the Tortoiſe?—

Nothing can be the *Ground* or *Reaſon* of any Thing, which, in the Order of our Ideas and of Nature, is *ſubſequent* to the Thing of which it is ſuppoſed the Ground, *&c.* But *Conſciouſneſs*, in the Order of our Ideas and of Nature, is *ſubſequent* to Unity——Conſequently, *Conſciouſneſs* cannot be the Ground of Unity. The *Major* Propoſition is evident: The *Minor* I prove thus: *Conſciouſneſs* is that reflex Act by which I *know* what I am, *&c.* If then I muſt

I muſt *be* what I am, (one or more) before I *know* what I am, then *Conſciouſneſs* muſt be *ſubſequent* to Unity: But I muſt *be* what I am (*viz.* one or more) *&c.*

The *Being* what I am, is the Foundation of my *knowing* what I am; and not *vice verſâ*. The Truth of conſcious *Knowledge* depends upon the Truth of *Things*, and not the Truth of Things upon that of our Knowledge. *Conſciouſneſs*, being a perſonal Act, does not *conſtitute*, but *pre-ſuppoſe*, the Perſonality; from which the Perſonal Act reſults. I might further add, that if *YOU* are only *one compound Being*, (you ſhould have ſaid *Perſon*) becauſe you are *conſcious*, then you put off Unity and Perſonality, like your Cloaths, when you fall aſleep; and reſume it again, when you awake. In ſhort, Subſtance is what it is; one or more, whether *conſcious* or *unconſcious*; and *Conſciouſneſs*, which is nothing but Knowledge, cannot alter the Nature of Things. Your Scheme bears a Reſemblance to Doctor CLARKE's: He made *Neceſſity*, in the Order of our Ideas, the *Ground* of the Subſtance, whoſe *Attribute* it was; and you imagine *Self-Conſciouſneſs* to be the *Ground* of *Self-Subſiſtence*, though the *Self* muſt be prior to the *Conſciouſneſs*.

Having ſhewn your new Scheme to be unſatisfactory; I proceed in the next Place to remove the Objections againſt the orthodox Scheme; which you call (not very conſiſtently with a certain Quality, which is a confeſſed Part of your Character) *unintelligible Jargon*.

I hope you will not tax me, for the future, with any Injuſtice for ſaying, *You were quitting what you* did *underſtand for what you* did not (fully) *underſtand*——

But what is *unintelligible Jargon?* Is our Notion of *Perſon* ſuch? It is at leaſt as intelligible as that of *Subſtance*, which is an undetermined *Something*, an *unknown* Support of certain *Modes*. It is as much above *your* Comprehenſion to conceive how *one* Perſon (ſuppoſing only one) being infinitely-extended, conſiſting of an infinite Diverſity of Parts, ſhould be yet *one* Subſtance; as how the *three* Perſons ſhould be *one* God. The Trinity is *one Subſtance*, becauſe *undivided*; not *one Perſon*, becauſe *diſtinguiſhed* into more intelligent Agents than one, *&c.* Each of the intelligent Agents is *Being*, becauſe *exiſting*; but not *Beings*, becauſe they do not exiſt *ſeparately*. Diſtinct Perſonal Properties no more *diſunite* (though they *diſtinguiſh*) the Subſtance; than diſtinct circumſcriptive Properties, determining the Parts of Subſtance to ſuch or ſuch a Part of Space and Diſtance, *diſunite* it, or make it ceaſe to be one.

You charge me with *ringing Changes upon the* Diſtinction of *divided* Subſtance and *diſtinct* Subſtance, But, are *diſtinct* and *divided* ſynonymous Terms? or, is *Indiviſibility* any Obſtruction to *Diſtinction?*

Conſider once more, That inexhauſtible *Power* which wields ſo many maſſy Bodies as the Planets *in* our ſolar Syſtem (and *beyond* it, if the fixed Stars are each of them attended with their reſpective Retinue of revolving Orbs) and that unfathomable *Wiſdom*, which adjuſts ſuch Variety of Movements without any Confuſion. Now where there is infinite

Power

Power and *Wiſdom*, there muſt be a wiſe and powerful *Subſtance*. That Subſtance which regulates the Revolution of the Planets in the *fixed Stars*, muſt be *diſtinct*, in *Place*, *Situation* and *Action*, from the particular Subſtance, which bids our Planets *here* go their inceſſant Round: and yet it is not *divided*; becauſe there is one uninterrupted Chain of Being without any Chaſm, Gap, or Diſcontinuity. Juſt as we call an Argument *one*, where each Link of the Chain adheres neceſſarily to the other by an unbroken Connexion of the Parts.

When therefore you ſay, that *Subſtance united to Subſtance conſiſts of different Subſtances*, you run counter to your own Scheme (where each of your three diſtinct *Beings* will, according to this Way of arguing, be *Subſtances* infinite in Number) and to the common Senſe of Mankind; which never gives the Name of *Subſtances*, but where the Parts are diſbanded, or capable of diſbanding and taking different Routs. *Matter* indeed is not Subſtance, but an Heap of Subſtances; becauſe it conſiſts of un-united, independent Parts. But when the Parts are ſo inviolably *wedded*, that there is no *divorcing* this from that; ſuch a Being we call truly One: the Parts being *eſſentially united*. View then each Link of the Chain together.——The three Perſons are Subſtance and Subſtance eſſentially united, having each of them the diſtinctive Characters of *I*, *Thou*, *He*, not diſtinguiſhed into more intelligent Agents—— Subſtance in Union with Subſtance doth not make Subſtances, therefore not *three* Gods——Doth not prevent *diſtinct* Action—— Therefore the Father and the

the Son might act *diſtinctly*; the one in *admitting*, the other in *giving* an Atonement ——

If you anſwer, that the Hypotheſis of the *Divine Extenſion* may be ill-grounded; I will grant it; but it does not affect what I contend for: that Subſtance and Subſtance in Union do not make Subſtances, which deſtroys your Scheme. For, ſince the *Eſſence* muſt be where the Eſſential *Attributes* are; ſince the Eſſential *Attributes*, *Wiſdom*, *Power*, &c. diſplay themſelves every-where; the whole Eſſence, upon the Scheme of Non-Extenſion, muſt act *here*; the whole Eſſence muſt act *there*; and the whole Eſſence *every-where*; whole in the whole, and whole in every Part: which amounts to the ſame Thing in the laſt Reſort. As long as the Propoſition before-mentioned ſtands it's Ground (which will be as long as there is any ſound, unbiaſſed Senſe to diſcern that what is *neceſſarily united* muſt be *One*) the main Objections, which bear the hardeſt upon the Doctrine of the *Trinity* and *Satisfaction* from *Arianiſm* and *Tritheiſm*, will fall impotently to the Ground.

It even *compels* You *to come (nolens volens)* into the ſame Scheme, and *preſſes* You into the ſame Service. For, what You call three, diſtinct, infinite Beings, muſt be Subſtance united to Subſtance by an unalienable Attachment, and conſequently make not three diſtinct Subſtances, nor therefore three diſtinct Beings.

If you will be content to reſt in *Generals*, without inquiring into the *minute* Circumſtances, or embracing any *particular* Explication of the *Ubiquity*; this is what I adviſe you to concerning the *Trinity*. And indeed in theſe high Points we are like People upon

upon *marſhy* Ground. We may ſkim *lightly* over the Surface. But if we *fix* our Foot; if we *dwell* too *long* upon any particular Spot; we ſink irretrievably, and the more we ſtruggle to get free, the more we are gravelled.

What you object, in Anſwer to my *Poſtſcript*, is ſo very ingenious and diverting, that I can ſcarce find in my Heart to examine it. I had ſaid, that to be ſovereign *Lawgiver*, was no *Eſſential* Perfection of the Deity: If it were, he muſt have been Lawgiver *ab æterno*, when there were no Beings to give Laws to. Upon which you comment thus: *Take a Specimen of your Reaſoning*, ſay you, *Goodneſs is no Eſſential Perfection of the Deity; for then muſt He have been* good *ab æterno*; good *before there were any created Beings* to be good to. The ſame may be ſaid of *God's Juſtice.*——Do you call this a Specimen of my Reaſoning? Sure you do not think me ſo ſenſeleſs. The Attributes of God are to be conſidered either *ad intra*, or *ad extra*; either as *inherent in* God, or, as *manifeſted by* Him. God then was *internally Good*, *Wiſe*, &c. *ab æterno*, before he *exerted* thoſe Attributes: But to be an *internal Lawgiver* is a Contradiction in Terms. God is *Good* by an abſolute Neceſſity of Nature. But then the *Exertion of his own infinite and unerring Perfection* in the Capacity of a *Lawgiver* is perfectly free. He might have created no Beings, or none that there would have been any Occaſion to give Laws to; or he may annihilate them. His Goodneſs and Wiſdom are *Eſſential* to Him: But his *Manifeſtation* of that Goodneſs or Wiſdom, in this or that *particular Manner* of Acting, is *voluntary*. If you will ſay, that it is neceſſary

ceſſary to us that he ſhould be *Lawgiver*, *ſtante rerum Hypotheſi*: I anſwer, this is only a *conditional* Neceſſity; and farther; that, upon a Suppoſition of three Perſons in the Deity, it is no more neceſſary that the *Son* ſhould be *ſupreme Lawgiver*, than that the *Father* ſhould be *Judge* at the laſt Day. Though the *ſame* Attributes are veſted in Both, yet Both need not diſplay them in *this* or *that* particular Scheme of Action. Till then more forcible Objections are brought, I muſt ſtill conclude; that what I have advanced in my *Poſtſcript* is a good Solution of your main Difficulty.

Upon comparing the ſcattered Paſſages in my Letter, which you bring together concerning the Merits of our Saviour, I find a plain Contradiction. I need not point it out to you; who had, I am ſure, Sagacity enough to perceive it, and Candour enough to paſs it by.

If the Divinity irreſiſtibly over-ruled the Humanity, and made *it intirely paſſive*, then it did not exalt and perfect, but deſtroy the human Nature, it made it a mere Machine; but if it did not irreſiſtibly controul it, then our Saviour's human Nature is as much intitled to the Glory of ſinleſs Perfection, as Angels and Archangels.

The human Nature of CHRIST, *by it's Obedience to the Will of* GOD, *did no more than what, as a Creature, was it's Duty to do: Conſequently, by your own Way of arguing, it could not merit.* The Merit then *of his Sufferings, if they could have any Merit, muſt ariſe from the Sufferings of a Divine Perſon.*

Anſwer. Though the *Sufferings* were the Sufferings of a Man; yet the *Oblation* was the Oblation of a God.

God. *We are redeemed, not with any corruptible Thing, but with the precious Blood of Chriſt, who, by his eternal Spirit*, or Deity, *offered himſelf without Spot to God.*

And this Act of the *Deity*, thus offering up his human Nature, is, I think, ſufficient, all Circumſtances being taken into the Account, to conſtitute *Merit*. Becauſe, as I obſerved in my former, all Creatures ſhine with borrowed Light, with Merit not their own: that is, with no Merit at all. They have nothing independent of their Creator. But our Saviour, who was God as well as Man, could, out of his *own peculiar Fund*, *diſcharge* our *Debt*. He, as God, had an *independent* Power over his human Nature. And to offer up what was his own INDEPENDENTLY, what was endeared to him by a perſonal Union, by a *free* and *voluntary* Act, may be, I hope, allowed to be meritorious; or elſe I have no Notion of Merit. Either then you are to prove, that no ſupernatural Means were neceſſary for our Atonement —— or, that God would not, or could not, find out any ſuch Means——or, that he could have contrived a better Expedient. For the firſt, ſee LAW, and my former Letter. The ſecond is too derogatory to God's Power and Goodneſs for you to aſſert. The laſt ſeems impoſſible. Becauſe, ſingle out what Angel or Archangel you pleaſe for your Purpoſe, this expiatory Sacrifice will have all the Excellency (*viz.* a perfect Model of Virtue, without any Alloy of Vice) that any other can have; and will beſides be ennobled with diſtinguiſhing Excellencies of it's own. For the perſonal Union will caſt a more diſtinguiſhed Glory on whatever is ſo nearly

nearly and inſeparably allied to the Deity, than any Creature beſides can have. To confirm which we may obſerve, that the Son of Man is placed *above* the Angels, where they are ſaid to be *ignorant of the Day of Judgment.* And whatever was deficient in this Sacrifice, if there was any Deficiency, was, or might be, made up by the *infinite Merits* of the Offerer *ſuperadded* to it, and placed to *our* Account. Thus, *God was in the World reconciling the World to himſelf: He became the Author of eternal Salvation,* &c.

What thoſe Merits *particularly* were, we need not inquire. A Man may know he *is ranſomed* by another from Captivity, without knowing the particular *Kind, Manner* and *Value* of the Ranſom. It is enough we know, that a *Divine* Perſon intereſted himſelf in this Affair. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the *Equivalency* of the Atonement and the *Merit* of it. The *Equivalency* conſiſted in this, that as one intelligent Being is more valuable than the whole Maſs of inſenſate Matter; ſo one faultleſs Pattern of Perfection is of more Worth than a whole World of ſinful Creatures. The *Merit* of it, as far as our general confuſed Notions reach, conſiſted in this, not *excluſively* of any *other* Means of meriting unknown to us; that the Oblation was the free, unconſtrained Act of One, more worthy than any Creature, offering up what was his own, and tranſacting the Scheme of Man's Salvation.

To enliven this dry Subject with an occaſional Reflection. I wonder why thoſe Writers, who fancy the Scale of Being to riſe gradually from Matter, in a regular Gradation, by an eaſy Tranſition from one

Species

Species to another, till they make near Approaches to Infinity, do not ſuppoſe our Saviour, partaking of both Natures, to be the *intermediate* Link between an uncreated Being and Creatures; as they imagine Man to be the *Nexus utriuſque mundi*, and to *fill* up the Gap between the *intellectual* and the *animal* Creation. This, you will ſay, is a wild Thought. But we fanciful Writers, when once we fly out, *pennis non homini datis*, into that mighty Void, where Knowledge fails, will people the Vacancy with Ideal Phantoms and Creatures of our own Brain.

But this puts me in Mind of the Concluſion of your Letter. I am no more for *digeſting manifeſt Abſurdities* than you are. But I ſee no Abſurdity here, except this be one; that Creatures of Yeſterday ſhould pretend to go to the *Bottom* of an *infinite* Subject with a very ſcanty Line. The moſt ſubſtantial Proof we can give of our *Knowledge* and *Judgment* is, to have a deep Senſe, and to make an humble Acknowledgment, of our *Ignorance* and *Incapacity* to judge about theſe high Things. An *Atheiſt* or *Manichæan* would argue thus: Such a Thing appears to me *manifeſtly* evil——therefore, Creation not the Work of a good God —— therefore, no over-ruling Providence at the Helm. Juſt ſo you argue; ſuch a Doctrine appears to me manifeſtly abſurd —— therefore Scripture not the Word of God. Whereas Both begin at the *wrong* End. Superior and uncontrouled Miracles, ſuch as *raiſing the Dead*, *creating Bread*, &c. do as much prove the Scripture to be the Word of God, as the common *ſtated* Courſe of Things prove an over-ruling Providence. That being once granted; you are no more at Liberty to reject a *Doc-*

trine,

trine, becauſe it may *appear* to you abſurd, than a *Manichæan* or *Atheiſt* is to reject a good Providence, becauſe ſuch a *Phænomenon* may *appear* to him evil. And Both ſhould conſider, whether it be not more eaſy to conceive that this *Phænomenon*, or that *Doctrine*, may *poſſibly* admit of a *rational* Solution; than that what is atteſted by *ſuch* Miracles ſhould be falſe; or that there ſhould be no Providence. It is *You* then that are going to take away the *Criterion* of Certainty, by ſuppoſing, that what is ſtamped with the Seal of God is *manifeſtly abſurd*. What you ſay above, that God *may permit very ſtrong and forcible Proofs from Miracles without being ſaid to tempt us*, does not come up to the Point. For our Proceſs is this —— Nothing can *unſettle* the Courſe of Nature in ſuch a Train of ſuperior Miracles, as *raiſing the Dead*, &c. but He who *ſettled* the Courſe of it, *viz.* God: God will not *lend* his Power, or *act* himſelf (which is widely different from *permitting* a Thing to be done) to authorize a Falſhood—— Conſequently, there is no Falſhood: Unleſs a Thing may be at once *true* as atteſted by God, and *falſe* as contradictory to Reaſon.

You may ſay, that we have only a *moral* Certainty that the Miracles were wrought; but an *abſolute* Certainty that the Doctrine is falſe—— A *Manichæan* would undoubtedly reaſon in the ſame Manner upon his Principles; but neither of you can prove your ſeveral Concluſions. I anſwer farther; that though the *Kinds* of Evidence, *viz. abſolute Certainty*, *moral Certainty*, *Probability*, are very *diſtinct*, when we conſider the *loweſt* Degree of the one (as, for Inſtance, of Probability or a *Likeneſs* to be true) and

and the *higheſt* Degree of another (as *moral* Certainty); yet where they make *near* Approaches, they are undiſtinguiſhable. Juſt as in the Rainbow, one Colour falls away ſo gradually, and another riſes ſo inſenſibly, that we ſee the Variety without being able to diſtinguiſh exactly where the one begins, and the other ends:

Uſque adeò quod tangit, idem eſt; tamen ultima diſtant.

Thus *abſolute* and *moral* Certainty are, in ſome Caſes, parted as it were by an inviſible Line. And though *Proofs* of Matter of Fact fall under the Head of *moral* Certainty; yet we may be as *abſolutely* ſure that King *Charles* the Firſt loſt his Head, and that *Julius Cæſar* was ſtabbed in the Senate-Houſe, as we can of ſome *Mathematical* Demonſtrations.

I need not apply this to Chriſtianity. I do not put the Iſſue of my Cauſe *ſolely* upon Proofs from Matter of Fact: Several others are to be taken into the Account, particularly the *intrinſic Excellency* of the Scriptures. For I cannot conceive how a Set of *obſcure* Men could more fully unfold, and more ſtrongly enforce, every Branch of Religion without the Aſſiſtance of God, than all the *Lawgivers* and *Philoſophers* from the Beginning of the World to that Time: carrying it to ſuch an Height, that whatever attempts to go *beyond* it, is viſionary and *Romantic*; and whatever falls *ſhort* of it is jejune and defective.

If I have dropt any Expreſſion that bears hard upon you, or ſeems to ſhew the leaſt Diſregard for you,

I will retract it, and beg your Pardon; ſincerely deſiring the Continuance of that Friendſhip, which I take to be an Happineſs, as well as an Honour, to me. If there be any Thing that you may think a mere Compliment; it is, I aſſure you, not half ſo much as what I have ſaid of you in your Abſence. Here I could expatiate. —— But when the Heart is *full* of Eſteem, affectionate Sentiments, and undiſſembled Love, there is no confining the Pen within certain Bounds. I therefore forbear——Only do me the Juſtice to believe, that I never wrote any Thing with more Sincerity than what follows: That you may live long and happily, that you may defend the moſt valuable Thing in the World, Chriſtianity (and I believe you will) with your Pen, and adorn it with your Life, is the affectionate Wiſh of,

Worthy SIR,

Your's ſincerely,

Richmond, June 10th, 1731.

JER. SEED.

The

The Third LETTER.

WORTHY SIR,

WERE I to copy after the Model of your laſt Letter, the Conteſt between us would conſiſt of theſe three Things: *Firſt*, Who could ſay the *handſomeſt* Things of one another: *Secondly*, Who could ſay the *bittereſt* Things againſt one another; and, *Laſtly*, Who could produce the ſtrongeſt Arguments to ſupport his own Notions.

I muſt chiefly keep to the *laſt* of theſe: declining the *firſt*, becauſe it is too *copious*; and the *ſecond*, becauſe too *barren*. I might indeed be very ſevere, but then it would be upon myſelf. The Arrow might be drawn to the Head, and levelled with a dexterous Aim; but could not reach a Merit which towers to ſo uncommon an Height as your's. It is with ſome Reluctance I tell you, that it was unmanly and ungenerous to point your Hoſtilities againſt me, when you knew it was not in my Power to make Reprizals upon you. Do but become like me, *poſitive* and *confident*; combating your own Shadow, beating the Air; in ſhort, labouring under a deplorable Want of common Senſe: Give me but one Inch of Ground to ſet my Foot upon, and you will find that I can ſhake even the Weight of your Character. But while I conſider *You* as a Gentleman of uncommon Senſe and Merit,

" With Wit well-natur'd, and with Books well-
" bred ;"

I cannot ſatyrize what is no Subject of Satyr. For *YOU* then to provoke me to enter the Liſts with you, by pointing your Raillery againſt me for Pages together, was (I will repeat the Charge) as cowardly, as if a Man, who was invulnerable from Head to Foot, ſhould challenge a weak, defenceleſs Creature to ſingle Combat——But enough of This.

In the following Letter you will find ſome Things paſſed ſlightly by, either becauſe I thought they had not much Weight, or becauſe I thought them anſwered already. I would willingly lay down *this* as a Rule to go by (though it is ten to one, but that I myſelf deviate from it) *viz*: to take Notice of nothing *but* what is really a Difficulty ; and to omit nothing that is really ſo ; to keep cloſe to the Merits of the Cauſe, and to pare off Luxuriancies.

With this View I will not defend my Inſtance about a *Pine-Apple*, and a *Pomegranate* ; not becauſe I think it *indefenſible*, but becauſe I think it *impertinent*, or unneceſſary to determine the Point in Debate——

I find, a little lower, you will *diſagree* with me, where we do not really *differ*. The *middle Term*, you ſay, *is not the Divine Nature* ; but, *the Unity of the Divine Nature*. Very well : and do not I ſay the very ſame ? I having ſaid, that " the *Manner* of the " Divine Unity was *incomprehenſible* ;" you thence would conclude, that it is *unintelligible* ; as if *Incomprehenſible* and *Unintelligible* muſt have the ſame Signification. Notwithſtanding you, both here and elſe-

where,

where, confound them; it would be an Affront to your Underſtanding to point out the Diſtinction between them. My Account of *Unity* is, it ſeems, to you *very looſe and indeterminate*; and you cannot *diſcover how a wide Unitarian differs from a Tritheiſt*. If you conſult Biſhop BULL's *Catholick Doctrine of the Trinity*,, you will find, that the Imputation of *Tritheiſm* is never to be faſtened but on thoſe who *divide* the *Subſtance*. Suppoſe then a Perſon, who was inveſted with a Power of *working* ſuperior Miracles, ſhould tell me; that in the Divine Subſtance there was a *triple* Diſtinction: *greater* than that of three mere *Modes* and *Relations*; and yet *leſs* than that of three diſtinct *Men* or *Angels*. My Ideas here are merely *negative* —— "A Diſtinction in the Divine "Nature —— not that of three *Modes*, —— *not* that of three diſtinct *Subſtances*:" yet I may give a rational Aſſent to this Doctrine; becauſe I cannot prove it to be *impoſſible*. Not *diſtinctly* perceiving the *Divine Nature*, I cannot *diſtinctly* perceive a Contradiction in the Nature of the Thing; and nothing, but a Contradiction and Impoſſibility can be a Bar to the Belief of a Doctrine atteſted by Miracles. But ſhould the ſame Perſon aſſert, that the Divine Subſtance was *one*, yet *ſevered* by a μέγα χάσμα (a great Gulph or Diſcontinuity;) this Propoſition I could not admit; becauſe I clearly perceive, that what is *diſunited* cannot be *one*. The ſhort of the Matter is this. Whatever is *one*, muſt be *indiviſum in ſe*. But *Tritheiſm* ſuppoſes the *Diviſion* or *Diviſibility* of the *Subſtance*.

Thus my Notion of the Divine *Unity*, however lame and inadequate, is too *ſtrict* to admit of the Name of *Tritheiſm*, and yet *wide* enough to take in

three *undivided intelligent Agents* into the ſame Divine Eſſence. And whoever pretends, from the negative Ideas of *Indiviſibility*, and *Simplicity* (or, a Negation of heterogeneous Mixtures) to prove, that no Kind of *Union* whatever is ſufficient to make *more* Perſons *one* Being; will ſoon find, that He is to work up a Demonſtration, where he has not ſufficient *Data* to build upon.

This would be,

" *Parva per Tyrrhenum Æquor——Vela dare.*"

where our Reaſon will be ſoon overſet, or carried away with *every Wind of Doctrine.*

For my Part, I ſtill own, I want your diſcerning Faculty to find out the neceſſary Connexion between *indiviſible* and *undiſtinguiſhable*. *Diſtinction* and *Diviſion* ſeem, to my dull Apprehenſion, two *different* Ideas. You will aſk me, no Doubt, what *Diſtinction* That is, which is neither a Diſtinction of three *Modes*, nor yet a Diſtinction of three *Subſtances*. To which I anſwer, that Subſtance and Subſtance united is *more* than three Modes, and yet not three Subſtances: becauſe whatever is *eſſentially* united, is *one* Subſtance. You aſk, " Is the Subſtance of the *ſecond* Perſon " the ſame *numerical* Subſtance with that of the *firſt*? " *&c.*"

I wiſh your enterprizing Genius would oblige me with fixing ſome certain *Principle* of *Individuation*, that I might know what makes one *numerical* Subſtance, according to *your* Philoſophy.

Let me prevail upon you, to add this Favour to your former. In your *ſecond* Letter you were pleaſed

ſed to honour me with a new *Tritheiſtical* Hypotheſis, which was highly diverting; though, I muſt confeſs, not very edifying. In your laſt, as there is no End of your Favours, You advance (ſolely with a View to my Entertainment) a new Scheme, *viz.* the *limited Extenſion* of the Divine Subſtance, making the Deity to be no more than *commenſurate to his Works*; that is (for it is the only Senſe the Word *commenſurate* bears) no more than *co-extended* with them as far as they reach. Proceed, Great Sir, to crown your repeated Kindneſſes with this laſt Maſter-piece of an adventurous Fancy: namely, an *Attempt to fix the Principle of Individuation.* 'Till you have done that, give me Leave to uſe the Word NUMERICAL with due Latitude; and to think, that it may admit of a *larger* or a *ſtricter* Senſe.

For Inſtance; according to your new Scheme of the *limited Extenſion* of the Deity, (I know you will be pleaſed that I take ſo much Notice of a *Stranger-Hypotheſis*, which is endeared to me by no Circumſtance but it's Relation to *You*:) I would aſk, whether this Subſtance, which is commenſurate to the Earth, be *numerical*, or no? In the *ſtricteſt* Senſe of the Word it muſt, except there can be a *Medium* between——Being and No-Being: It muſt be *one numerical Part*, and that is *one Being*. And yet, except you will admit as many *Subſtances* as there are *Parts* in your *finitely-extended Deity*, it muſt be in a *larger* Senſe one *numerical* Subſtance with That which is commenſurate to the Sun, to the fixed Stars, *&c.*

But, whether you will reject, or no, your *new* Hypotheſis, I will leave you to diſprove, that *This* Subſtance can act *diſtinctly* from *That* when it is *indi-*

viſibly united to it; and conſequently (in my Senſe of the Word *Numerical)* one Subſtance with it.

I am ſenſible you would be uneaſy, if I ſhould diſmiſs your Hypotheſis thus, without being more *particular* in my Regard to it. That you may not therefore complain of my *Coldneſs* and *Indifference* to any Thing of your's, I ſhall ſpend a little more of my Time upon it, and pay my Compliments in an ampler Manner.

If the Deity be *only commenſurate* to his Works; then, He either can act beyond the Confines of this World, or He *cannot*. If he can; then His Exiſtence, according to you, reaches beyond it's Verge. For nothing can act *where* it is not; any more than it can act *when* it is not. If He *cannot* act beyond this determinate Sphere, then there muſt be ſomething to obſtruct Him. For a mere *Nothing* cannot be a Bar to his Action. And the extra-mundane Void is a mere *Nothing*. I know that the *Tranſlator* of Archbiſhop KING quotes EPISCOPIUS to prove it an Abſurdity, that the Deity ſhould be in an extra-mundane Void. "Becauſe to be *in* a Place, ſup-"poſes the Deity to take a *Denomination* or real *Ha-*"*bitude* from the Place in which he is. But he can-"not derive a real *Habitude* from *Nothing*." But notwithſtanding this, I would aſk; —— Was the Deity in the Void, where the World *now* is, *before* He produced it? If He was, then He may exiſt in the extra-mundane Negation of Matter beyond the Scene of his Operations, as well as He did in this Void, before the mundane Syſtem was in Being. If He was not, then how could He exert His Power, where His Subſtance was not? This would be to *hang*

Power

Power in a *literal* Senſe, as *Job* does the *Earth* in a *figurative, upon Nothing*. It would be to build Caſtles in the Air, without any Foundation.

You are apt, it ſeems, *to ſubſcribe in the Negative to the Immenſity or Infinity of the Deity* —— But can you really ſet Bounds to that Being *whom the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain?* Can you ſay to him, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther*; and here *ſhall thy* Exiſtence *be ſtayed?* This is all we mean by *Infinite*, viz. A Negation of Bounds. If the Deity be not *Infinite* or *Immenſe*, then He muſt either be bounded by *Himſelf*, or by *ſome Other* —— or by *ſome Impoſſibility* in the Nature of the Thing. Not by Himſelf—— For He neceſſarily is, what He is. He cannot therefore admit of any Diminution or Increaſe even from Himſelf —— much leſs can He admit of theſe from any Other, both for the ſame Reaſon, and becauſe whatever *limits*, muſt be *ſuperior* to what is *limited* —— Not, by any Impoſſibility in the Nature of the Thing; for it is no more impoſſible for the Deity to be infinite in his *Exiſtence* than in his *Duration*. He who is infinite in *one* Perfection, may be infinite in *all*. There can be no *Limitation*, where there is no *Limiter*. For *Limitation* being an *Effect* muſt ſuppoſe a *Cauſe*. But *Extenſion*, you ſay, *infers Parts*; and *Parts*, *Number*; and *Number*, *Limitation*. I am not obliged to defend *Extenſion* any more than you; and conſequently am not ſolicitous whether this be a juſt Anſwer: That, by Number you either mean *actual Number*, or the *Power of Numbering*. It is true, that *actual* Number can never be infinite, becauſe what we actually number cannot be numberleſs: But

ſtill

ſtill our *Power* of Numbering can have no Bounds, which is too plain to dwell upon. As far as we do *actually* number, it cannot be infinite. But ſtill we muſt conceive an infinite Surplus behind.

Though you triumph over me in an unmerciful Manner, I no more grant *infinite Extenſion* than you do. And yet you ſuppoſe it, as well as I do, in your former Letter. I can ſhew you the Paſſage: "I would not willingly ſuppoſe the Deity to be "meaſurable by Yards, Ells, and Poles; but then "I cannot help conceiving ſomething Analogous to "Extenſion. For univerſal Action ſuppoſes the "univerſal, ſubſtantial Preſence of the Deity, and "univerſal, ſubſtantial Preſence infers ſomething ana-"logous to Extenſion. WHERE *and* PLACE *are* "*Terms relative to the ſpacious extended Exiſtence.*" Be it ſo; then I doubt the Deity will be extended. For can we *live, and move, and have our Being in* God, and yet that very Being *in whom we live*, &c. not be preſent, *where* we live, and move, and have our Being?

From thoſe manifeſt Traces of the Divine Wiſdom, which appear through the whole Oeconomy of Nature, we infer that there is every-*where* a wiſe Cauſe ſubſiſting. The whole World is, in this Reſpect, as it were one great Temple; where, as in the *Jewiſh*, the *Shechinah*, or Divine Preſence, ſhines conſeſt in a viſible Glory. Give me Leave to cite, for this Purpoſe, an admirable Paſſage in CICERO, *pro Milone*, which I do not remember to have ſeen quoted: "Eſt, eſt profectò illa Vis *(cæleſtis)* neque "in his Corporibus, atque in hâc Imbecillitate *ineſt* "quiddam quod vigeat ac ſentiat; & *non ineſt* in hoc

tanto

" tanto Naturæ, tam præclaro Motu: ni fortè id-
" circo eſſe non putant, quia non apparet, nec cer-
" nitur: proinde quaſi noſtram ipſam mentem, quâ
" ſapimus, quâ providemus, quâ hæc ipſa agimus ac
" dicimus, videre, aut plane qualis, aut ubi ſit ſen-
" tire poſſimus." You might as well fancy that the Soul can perceive the Images of Things, and actuate the Body, without being *preſent* in the Brain; as that the Deity can invigorate all Nature without being *preſent* every-where. The only Queſtion at preſent is; not whether the Deity be every-where, or in every Place; but, whether *extended* or *non-extended?*

If the Deity be *unextended*, this Subſtance which acts in this Point of Space, muſt be either *all* the Divine Subſtance, or *not all.* There can be no more a Medium (upon a Suppoſition of the Deity's acting in this Place) between either the *whole* Subſtance being here, or *not the whole*; than there can between *Being* or *not Being*; betweeen *material* or *not material.* And you might as well affirm, that the Deity is neither *extended* nor *un-extended*; as affirm, that He is neither *totus in toto*, nor yet Part *here*, and Part *there.* If you ſay, it is the *whole* Subſtance that acts *here*, then the Divine Subſtance is *exhauſted here*, and there can be no Remainder left to *fill the Heaven*, &c. For there cannot be *more* than *All.* The *Fulneſs* of the Deity, this Scheme ſuppoſes, is engroſſed by this Part; And yet it is not engroſſed either. For it ſubſiſts *whole* in another Part; and ſo on *in infinitum.* If you ſay, it is not the *whole*, then you admit of *Parts*, and conſequently of the *Extenſion*

ſion of the Deity: and indeed I would embrace this Scheme readily, if the Difficulty of *totus in toto* did not haunt it too. For upon the Hypotheſis of Extenſion, either the eſſential Attributes are co-extended with the Eſſence, or they are not. If they *are* co-extended, then there will be Ells, and Yards, and Miles of the divine Conſciouſneſs. But if they *are not*, then, as the Eſſence cannot be without the Eſſential Attributes, they muſt be either Part here and Part there, which would be to make as many diſtinct Conſciouſneſſes as there are Parts; or they muſt be *tota in toto*.

I know not how to get over theſe Difficulties without having Recourſe to the Scheme of Analogy which the *Cambridge-Wits*, for whom I have a very great Regard, generally declare againſt. The Deity muſt be a Being whom no Place can exclude, and none include or circumſcribe. And if we may argue from our imperfect Ideas; Either his immaterial Subſtance muſt be all and intire with every Part of the corporeal Subſtance, it has an immediate Communication with —— or it muſt be united to it Part by Part; ſo that they ſhall be co-extended.

If then you can believe the Deity to be *Omnipreſent*, though you cannot conceive the *Manner* of His *Omnipreſence*, why cannot you believe the Trinity *in Unity*, though you cannot conceive how *three*, in one Reſpect, ſhould be *one* in another? You believe the Former, becauſe you can prove the Reality of the Thing from *Reaſon*; why do you not then aſſent to the Latter, becauſe you can prove it from *Scripture?* The Scripture was no more written to *explain* the *Doctrine* of the Trinity, than Reaſon was given

you

you to *explain* the *Modus* of the Divine *Ubiquity*. But you have a ſingular Fancy, "That the Scrip-"ture aſſerts three diſtinct Divine Beings." If you can make out, that it aſſerts three *ſeparate* or *ſeparable* Beings, the Proof will be as valuable a Curioſity as your Principle of *Individuation*, for which I am to be indebted to you. If you cannot; whatever falls ſhort of this will be, give me Leave to ſay, impertinent.

The next Article is that of *Eternity*; which you define by an *unalterable Permanency*, and an *infinite Ability to exiſt* —— two different Ideas. For infinite Ability to exiſt is no more infinite Permanency or Duration; than your Ability to anſwer this Letter is an actual Anſwer to it. You deny both the *eternal Succeſſion* and *eternal Now*: that is, according to your Scheme, the Deity neither exiſts *all at once*; nor yet *not all at once*, or ſucceſſively; and if you can believe this, *great is your Faith.* For my Part, I find it impoſſible to doubt, that the Deity has not exiſted longer To-day, than he had done Yeſterday: and conſequently that he exiſts SUCCESSIVELY: And what neceſſarily extorts my Aſſent, I muſt believe to be true. I argue farther, that a *Succeſſion* of *Operation* neceſſarily ſuppoſes a *Succeſſion* of *Duration*. He who *acts* not all at once, exiſts not all at once. But the Deity acts not all at once. He, who created the World in ſix Days, redeemed Mankind ſome Thouſand Years after; who will deſtroy it in Time to come, and then judge it; He, I ſay, operates ſucceſſively: and what *operates* ſucceſſively, *endures* ſucceſſively. If *paſt*, *preſent*, and *future* may be applied to the *Operations* of the Deity, then they muſt be applied to the *Deity operating*.

This

This is little leſs than a Demonſtration of the *ſucceſſive* Exiſtence: And yet I will not deny that it is clogged with inextricable Difficulties; far greater than any the Trinity is embarraſſed with. If I had a Mind to particularize them, I could pour upon you an Inundation of Metaphyſics. But I chuſe rather to refer you to the Writers mentioned in my laſt.

The next Article that falls under your Conſideration is the Divine *Preſcience*.

To convince you of the Danger of wading beyond your Depth; and that there may be an *apparent* Contradiction, where there is not a *real* one, I aſked you, "Does it not ſeem to imply a Contradiction, that "God ſhould infallibly foreknow Contingencies? "that he ſhould certainly foreſee uncertain Events?" To this you reply, that *Events may be certain, but* not *neceſſary*. But can that be certain, which may be, or may not be, which I ſuppoſe is the Meaning of *not neceſſary*? And is not what depends upon the Will of a free Agent, what may, or may not be? Whatever *certain* and *neceſſary* may be in other Caſes; yet they ſeem here, which is all I contend for, to be equivalent Terms. Either the Deity's Foreknowledge is abſolutely certain and infallible, or it is not. If it is not, the Deity's Knowledge would be imperfect; and all Imperfection is to be removed from the Deity.

If it be ſaid, that it is abſolute, how can there be an abſolutely certain and determinate Knowledge of what is undetermined —— what is floating in Suſpence, —— what I have in my Power to act, or not to act? As to what you ſay below, I anſwer, that God

God does not *neceſſitate* Actions by his infallibly foreſeeing them; but he could not, if we may argue from our imperfect Views, infallibly foreſee them, if they were not-neceſſary, or contingent. His Infallibility is not the *Cauſe*, but it is the *Reſult*, of the Certainty of the Object. As to your Argument (which is very ingeniouſly expreſſed, as every Thing of yours is) drawn from the Deity's intimate Knowledge of the Workings of human Nature; it's Paſſions and Reaſonings: I anſwer, either theſe neceſſarily determine the Soul, or not. If they do not, then ſuch muſt the Knowledge neceſſarily be as the Action (the Object of that Knowledge) is; fixed and determined, if *that* is fixed and determined; if not fixed, it can only amount to an high Degree of Probability, or, at beſt, moral Certainty: And it muſt be more or leſs to be depended upon, in Proportion as the Perſon acting by an habitual Attachment to ſuch particular Methods of Action, acts more or leſs mechanically, or makes nearer Approaches to *Neceſſity*, or an Impoſſibility to turn his Thoughts into another Channel. In ſhort, Knowledge muſt keep Pace with the Nature of the Thing. Beſides, the Soul often exerts a mere arbitrary Act of her inviſible Empire in chuſing *this* rather than *that*, where there is an abſolute Indifference, without any Influence from any aſſignable Motives, Reaſonings, or Paſſions.

But to take this Matter a little higher —— A *future* Determination of my Will, before it has determined itſelf, is *no* Determination, is a mere Non-Entity. And of a mere Non-Entity, or *Nothing*, there can be no *Knowledge*. Conſequently, God cannot

read

read or foreſee in my Soul, what is not there at all. *Q. E. D.*

But he may know what he will do *Himſelf*, his Will being invariable; and conſequently there is no Difficulty in conceiving that he might fore-know your Exiſtence, looking through the whole Plan of his Creation, and having a comprehenſive View of all the Beings that have, or are to act their Part upon the Theatre of the World.

The ſame may be ſaid of the Laws by which he governs the Material World, which are nothing more than the Deity's knowing that he will act uniformly and conſiſtently, nothing but the Knowledge of his own Determinations. Whereas you intimate, that "what is *certainly* paſt was certainly future; and "what was *certainly* future, might be *certainly* fore-"known:" Not to examine, whether there be not a Flaw, which I think there is, in the Argument; it is ſufficient to ſay, that my Argument is at leaſt a Match for it; that nothing can be *certain*, which *may*, or *may not* be; as depending upon the *undetermined* Will of a free Agent.

But you aſk, Do you not then believe the Divine Preſcience? Yes, I do ſincerely. Not becauſe I think the Objections againſt it are eaſily anſwered; but becauſe the Proofs for it preponderate, and ſuffer me not to ſuſpend my Aſſent. Were the *Trinity* in *Unity* embarraſſed with ſo great Difficulties, you would have much more Reaſon to reject the Belief of it than you have at preſent.

But *Manum de Tabulâ*——That Being who *dwells in unapproachable Glory*, is too bright an Object to contemplate, *Oculo irretorto*, with undazzled Eyes; without

without being blinded by the Exceſs of his Effulgence. I was going to enlarge, but have the Pleaſure to find myſelf prevented by your Sentiments on that Head, which in a Letter, where every Thing is bright and ingenious, ſhine with *diſtinguiſhed* Brightneſs. Your Thoughts are the ſame in Subſtance, as mine in my former, and only differ from them, as your's always will, in Vivacity, and your ſprightly Happineſs of Diction. There is as much Difference between the ſame Sentiment cloathed by you, "*quem Muſæ quintâ parte ſui Nectaris imbuerunt*," and expreſſed in my homely Manner, as there is between the Actions of an accompliſhed Gentleman and of a Man of the common Rank. A *plain Man* may do an Action of the ſame intrinſic Worth as the *Gentleman*; But then the *Gentleman* never fails to ſtamp an additional Value upon what he does by a peculiar Grace, a Manner and Decorum; and doubles an Obligation by beſtowing it with the Air of a Perſon that is obliged. Thus I may hit upon a Thought the ſame materially as your's; But you can give a particular Charm and Beauty to it, and infuſe, as it were, a Soul and Spirit into that Sentiment, which was a dull and uninformed Maſs before. Free from that obſcure Diligence which unhappily diſtinguiſhes the Writings of ſome great Scholars, a native Eaſineſs makes Learning ſit gracefully upon you without any forbidding Appearances.

I muſt not paſs by an occaſional Remark of your's upon the *Orthodox* in general; who, it ſeems, have Strength of Reaſon enough to ſee the Weakneſs of their Reaſon *in the deep Things of God:* and therefore

will believe what has the *Stamp of Myſtery* upon it. Creation and Redemption —— from the one we derive a *temporary Being*, from the other an *eternal Well-being* —— Both of them invironed with Myſtery —— Both, notwithſtanding *this* Reaſon, to be admitted —— or both, for *that* Reaſon, to be diſcarded. You mention ſome, who love to *magnify Difficulties*, and *can digeſt nothing till they have made it indigeſtible*. I am not ignorant at whom this notable Piece of Satyr is levelled, and had I not reſolved to keep in the Overflowings of my Gall, I ſhould be tempted to make an impotent Reply. But I forbear ——only indulge my Impertinence in making an unmeaning Reflection, which every Body muſt ſee is unapplicable to You.

Though Human Folly, like Matter, is much the ſame at all Times; yet it admits of an infinite Variety of *Modifications*: it is continually ſhifting the Scene, and it is no ſooner ſubdued in one Form, than it ſtarts up in another. And had CERVANTES, who laughed out of Countenance, by an inimitable Vein of Raillery, *amorous* and *military Romances*, the reigning Folly of that Age; had he, I ſay, lived now, he would have turned the Edge of his Ridicule againſt *Metaphyſical Romances*, which are at preſent ſo much in Vogue. Nothing more common now-a-days than to erect new Schemes, which are for a while the Wonder of the Unthinking. And when the *ſtrong Man*, well-armed with Learning and Abilities, keepeth his new-erected Building, his intellectual Goods are *in Peace* —— till a *ſtronger than he ariſeth, and ſtrippeth him of his Armour in which he truſted*. How many fine *Hypotheſes* have you and I

ſeen

ſeen in *Morality* and *Metaphyſics*, which after having *flouriſhed for a little Time, withered away, becauſe they had no Depth?* Whereas the Scriptures have ſtood the Teſt of Ages: they continue, like their great Author, *the ſame Yeſterday, To-day, and for ever*; ever attacked, and ever triumphant. And when once Men, enamoured of their own *Metaphyſical Reveries*, relinquiſh them; (juſt as the *Iſraelites* forſook the living God) they ſet up ſome vain and ſenſeleſs Idol of the Imagination; and then wonder that all Mankind do not *fall down* and *adore* it. I add farther, that whoever has attempted to explain away the venerable *Myſteries* of Chriſtianity, has made the Doctrines far more *myſterious* than they were before. This is exemplified by Doctor CLARKE's *Scripture-Doctrine*, &c. who has attempted to get rid of the Difficulties of the Orthodox Scheme at the Expence of much greater. "*Graviorem plagam* "*recepit, ut leviorem repelleret.*"

You ſee, that this Reflection is, according to Promiſe, undeſigning. I will add another that does concern you.

Men of the *common Level* may with Reaſon be afraid of being loſt in a Crowd. To paſs themſelves upon the World for Men of Penetration, they muſt ſtrike into new Tracks. But *You* will always be diſtinguiſhed from the *Many* by the ſuperior *Height* and *Elevation* of your Genius. When you *do not* differ from them,

——*Humero ſupereminet omnes,*

will be applicable to *You*.

I proceed now to the ſecond Part of your Letter, where I find nothing very material, till You attack the *Indiſcerpible Bottom*, as You call it. In Anſwer to the Objection, *that This Perſon could not ſatisfy That, becauſe the Eſſence was one and the ſame*; I obſerved, that Eſſence might be one and the ſame, becauſe *indiviſible* or *indiſcerpible* —— Indiſcerpibility was no Bar to Diſtinction and diſtinct Actions —— Therefore the *Father* and the *Son* might act *diſtinctly* in *giving* and *receiving Satisfaction*.

Here I played my Cannon ſo briſkly, that you were going to raiſe the Siege ingloriouſly; and to quit the Field in Precipitation and Diſorder. But, like other Heroes, then exerting their Courage moſt, when in the deepeſt Diſtreſs; You at laſt, collected in yourſelf, bid me Defiance. I am ſorry to find your Strength bears no Proportion to your Heroiſm. For, wanting better Weapons, you begin the Onſet with *ſmall Shot*; *alias*, *Indiſcerpible Atoms*. Your *Metaphyſical* Forces muſt be very poor and languid, when you were forced to call in *Natural Philoſophy* to your Aid.

Theſe *Indiſcerpible Atoms*, by your own Confeſſion, are not *abſolutely* indiſcerpible. But the Deity, if he does conſiſt of Parts, conſiſts of Parts *eſſentially unmoveable* from each other, and *unpartible*, without an expreſs Contradiction *in Terms*. For all Diviſion implies Limitation, and Limitation is contrary to our Ideas of the Deity. He cannot be divided without ceaſing to be infinite; becauſe where there is a Chaſm (and *Diviſion* makes a Chaſm) there can be no Infinity; and He cannot ceaſe to be infinite, without ceaſing to be God. He is *neceſſarily* what

what he is, conſequently, if he be undivided, he muſt be *neceſſarily undivided*, and *neceſſarily indiviſible*. By *Parts* then in the Deity, if the Scheme of *Extenſion* be granted, we muſt not underſtand what is *partible* (for that is only true of *corporeal* Parts) but *Metaphyſical* Parts; or *ſo much* of the Divine Subſtance, as is commenſurate to ſuch an aſſignable Portion of Matter. And to argue, that becauſe *Phyſical* Parts are ſeparable, therefore *Metaphyſical* Parts muſt be ſo too, is a very inconcluſive Way of Arguing; it is *Tranſitio à Genere ad Genus*. Thus the *happy Beam of Light, which you had ſtruck upon*, proves to be nothing elſe but an *Ignis Fatuus*.

You tell me, that *Indiſcerpibility infers Parts*; and I am ſure *Diſcerpibility* does. Hard Fate for thoſe who would prove the Deity *Impartible!* for he muſt, it ſeems, have Parts, if he be either *diſcerpible*, or *indiſcerpible*; either *diviſible* or *indiviſible*.

The Sum and Subſtance of what I would ſay is this —— That your indiſcerpible Atoms conſiſt of *above* and *under*; of *this* and *that* Side; and it can be no Impoſſibility for the Deity, whatever it may be to the Powers of Nature, to ſeparate the *Upper* from the *Under*, and *this* Side from *that*. But what can ſeparate the Deity? —— not Himſelf; no more than He would limit Himſelf: not any created Being; for can a created Being limit and disjoin That by which he is created? You refer to what you have ſaid before to diſprove, that *Indiſſoluble Union* may conſtitute Unity, *&c.* and I take the ſame Privilege to refer to what I have ſaid above in Proof of it. I never adopted the *extended Scheme*; but, becauſe *You ſuppoſed* it; in Complaiſance to you I argued from

it; not ignorant, in the mean Time, that the *Trinity* would ſtand it's Ground upon the Scheme of *Non-Extenſion*, perhaps with greater, I am ſure with equal Advantage. Why you call the Scheme *an unfriended Infant*, I want to be informed. Can that be *unfriended* which is countenanced by the great Names of LIMBORCH, LOCKE, TILLOTSON, CLARKE, and NEWTON? to which I add, with Pleaſure, my ingenious *Correſpondent* in the former Part of his Letter.

What you ſay below in this Page about a Contradiction, I have anſwered towards the Beginning of this Letter. *Indiſcerpibility is a negative Idea.* I am glad, that *Indiſcerpibility* is no Bar to Diſtinction, and diſtinct Actions. *You allow* that it is not, and I heartily thank you: For, that being allowed, each Link of the Chain is made firm in my Argument, whether the *extended* or *unextended* Scheme takes place. But alas! alas! how ſhort-lived and fleeting are human Joys! Caſting my Eyes upon another Page, I find you deny what you before allowed; and tell me, that *Indiviſibility is an Obſtruction to Diſtinction.* I will not anticipate here what will be more proper to be ſaid hereafter when I come to that Page.

I wiſh I could draw a Veil over what is to follow. It will be a melancholy Scene. Nothing but your Requeſt, which ſhall have alway the Force of an authoritative Command with me, could prevail upon me to proceed to re-conſider with great Reluctance your poor unfortunate *Tritheiſtical* Hypotheſis.

The firſt Argument I produced againſt it was drawn from *Moſes*, and our Saviour, who quotes the

the Text. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord (Jehovah) your God is one Lord*; one neceſſarily-exiſting Subſtance. It is very obſervable that, after our Saviour had quoted theſe Words, when the Scribe ſaid, *There is one God, and there is none other but He*, Chriſt commends the Scribe for *having anſwered diſcreetly*: which he could not have done, if, beſides that *only* God, *(none other but He)* there had been a *Trinity* of Gods (according to Your Scheme) to be worſhipped. Our Saviour's Commendation of the Scribe is, conſequently, a ſtrong Reinforcement of the genuine Meaning of the Text.

By neceſſarily-exiſting Subſtance *Moſes* means, you ſay, the *Manner* of the Divine *Exiſtence: No other Beings but your Three do exiſt in that Manner*. The Senſe then is this. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord* (viz. ſuch a *Manner* of Exiſtence) *your God*, is one ſuch *Manner* of Exiſtence. And if he had meant this, the *Iſraelites* would have been no *wiſer for this Aſſertion of* Moſes than *You* are. According to this Interpretation when the Scriptures tell us, that God made at firſt *one Man*, from whom the reſt deſcended; we need not underſtand that he made *one Being*, but *one* ſuch *Manner of Exiſtence*, which was originally communicated to a conſiderable Number of Men. For though *Jehovah* ſignifies one Being neceſſarily-exiſting, one τὸ ὄν, yet it may ſignify three ſeparate Beings; provided their Manner of Exiſtence be of the ſame Kind. *Jehovah* implies Being that exiſts by Neceſſity: and conſequently, if the Scripture aſſerts one neceſſarily-exiſtent Being, what Right have you to ſuppoſe three *diviſible* Beings? What ſeems to have led you into your Miſtake was

this——*Jehovah*, neceſſarily-exiſting Subſtance, implies two Ideas; *Neceſſary Exiſtence*, and the *Subſtance* or *Subſtratum* of that neceſſary Exiſtence. In your Expoſition you retain the former of theſe Ideas; and drop the latter, that of the *Subſtratum*. And whereas your Comment ſhould have run thus; the Subſtance veſted with ſuch a Mode of Exiſtence as is there ſpecified, is one Subſtance veſted with that Mode by letting the Idea of *Subſtance* ſlip out of the Account, you expound it thus: The Mode of Exiſtence is one Mode of Exiſtence. Is this, to turn your own Artillery upon you, to interpret Scripture according to the common Rules of Criticiſm? or is it not rather to put a *forced and unintelligible Senſe when it admits of a plain and intelligible Conſtruction?* I ſay, plain and intelligible; *viz.* that Being and Being may be ſo cloſely and inſeparably united as to make one Being, becauſe they have an indiviſible Περιχώρησις and Ἐνύπαρξις, a cloſe *Inexiſtence* and *Permeation* of one another, without any Poſſibility of being ſundered the one from the other. According to that of our Saviour——*I am in the Father, and the Father in Me:* and, *the Father that dwelleth in me*, &c. And is not this a much more rational Solution of the Difficulty, as well as more agreeable to Scripture, than your's; who ſuppoſe a forlorn *Mode* of neceſſary Exiſtence to be meant in the Text without any *Subſtratum?* Beſides, what think you of that celebrated Text, *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe Three are One,* τὰ ἕν εἰσι, are one Being; one Nature; in Oppoſition to the Words in the next Verſe, where the three Agents

Agents are ſaid to *agree in one*, ὡς τὸ ἓν εἶναι, have an *Uniformity*, but are not *united?* If you diſpute the Genuineneſs of the Text, I refer you to MILL, MARTIN, TWELLS, BLACKWALL on the *ſacred Claſſicks*, and TRAPP's *Moyer's* Lectures; If you admit the Text, you muſt admit that they are One, not merely *uniform* in Eſſence.

The ſecond Argument againſt it was, that it was to multiply Beings without Neceſſity. You had no Grounds to ſuppoſe three ſeparable Divine Beings, conſequently the Suppoſition of three ſuch Beings was groundleſs. Scripture, as I have proved above, is againſt you; and you cannot bring one Shadow of a Proof from Reaſon. As much as you deal in wonder-working Magic, you cannot conjure up one thin, airy, unſubſtantial Phantom of an Argument from the *abſtract Nature of the Thing*. You may prove from Effects *one* firſt Cauſe, but not *more* than one; *one* being ſufficient to produce all the Phænomena in Nature.

It is contrary to the Laws of Diſputation only to aſſert what you ſhould prove: *viz. That you have Grounds for ſuch a Suppoſition.* He that aſſerts a Thing ſhould prove it. Thus defenceleſs is your *Hypotheſis*, *oppoſed* by plain Texts of Scripture, and *unfriended* by Reaſon. And what has been hitherto by you advanced, appears to be nothing but the uneaſy Efforts of an *Hypotheſis* expiring unavoidably, yet ſtruggling hard for Life. Let us ſee whether you have better Succeſs in what follows.

The third Argument againſt it you tranſcribe; which is, that if your ſuppoſed three infinite Subſtances be *divided*, or (for it is the ſame Thing here) *diviſible*,

viſible, they cannot all be infinite. The Reaſon, which you have not tranſcribed, is there ſubjoined: but if they be *undivided* or *indiviſible*, then your Scheme coincides with that of the Orthodox; which is, "neither to confound the Perſons, nor to divide the Subſtance."

To this you reply; *Though you do not admit of three* divided *Subſtances, yet you grant they are* diviſible. You granted too, what I proved, that if they be *divided*, they cannot be *infinite*. If then (as you grant, and I have proved) *Infinity* excludes *Diviſion*; it follows, that what is *neceſſarily infinite*, muſt be *neceſſarily undivided*. But your three infinite Beings are neceſſarily *infinite*, as they are neceſſarily *exiſtent*; they do not admit of any Diminution or Addition; conſequently, they muſt be neceſſarily *undivided*; and what is neceſſarily *undivided* is *indiviſible*. Or thus; If (as you allow) what is divided cannot be infinite, then a Poſſibility of Diviſion ſuppoſes a Poſſibility of their ceaſing to be infinite; and a Poſſibility of their ceaſing to be infinite, ſuppoſes a Poſſibility of their ceaſing to be what they neceſſarily are; which is a Contradiction in Terms.

Again; if nothing can act where it is not, then either each of your three Beings muſt neceſſarily coexiſt every-where with an uninterruptible Fulneſs of Being without any Separability of the one from the other; or where there is a Separability of any one of them from the other, there is a Poſſibility for that Being not to exiſt there——Conſequently, there is a Poſſibility of his not being able to act there——Conſequently, there is a Poſſibility of his becoming an impotent or imperfect Being——Conſequently, he

he will not be neceſſarily God——Conſequently he is no God at all.

You retreat again to your impregnable Fortreſs, *Conſciouſneſs*. *Conſciouſneſs*, you ſay, *cannot be ſuppoſed without any previous Diſtinction of Being to ſupport it*. I grant it. But if the *Trinity* is Subſtance and Subſtance *eſſentially united* —— If what is *eſſentially* united, is *one*; or, if *indiſſoluble* Union conſtitute *Unity* —— then *Conſciouſneſs* or *Conſciouſneſſes*, whatever *Diſtinction* of Being they may prove, cannot diſprove the *Unity*. What is ſo neceſſarily rivetted and united, let not that Inchanter *Conſciouſneſs* put aſunder or diſunite. This may ſerve for an Anſwer to all you have ſaid concerning *Conſciouſneſs*, which does not injure our Scheme, nor benefit your's. For *Conſciouſneſs* cannot *divide* the Subſtance. I have already proved your ſuppoſed three Subſtances to be *indiviſible*: And you unfortunately grant, that *diviſible* and *diſtinguiſhable* are the ſame; and ſo it cannot *diſtinguiſh* them either without *dividing* them, which is impoſſible. Thus you have got a Trinity of Gods, which are neither *diviſible* nor *diſtinguiſhable*. *Diſtinct without being divided* is, you are pleaſed to ſay, *unintelligible Jargon*.

And now having diſpatched your Scheme, what hinders but I might indulge my ſatyrical Vein after your Example, which I ſhould be proud to follow in every Thing elſe? —— But I ſcorn to inſult the Dead —— Peace, everlaſting Peace be to the Shade of your moſt lamented, and indeed moſt lamentable Hypotheſis! O darling Offspring of a worthy Sire! Could either my generous Pity (for thou waſt, *vel Priamo miſeranda*) or thy Father's Proweſs in War have

have ſaved thee, thou hadſt not died. But when there are *mala Stamina Vitæ*; when the Vitals are unſound, all Human Endeavours are vain and ineffectual;

" Evandro, *qualem meruit*, Pallanta *remitto*;"

I ſend you back the dead Corpſe to be buried in eternal Oblivion. I allow you as you have an inexhauſtible Fund of Wit, to ſay a World of fine Things upon it; to ſtrew the Flowers of your Oratory upon it's lifeleſs Carcaſe, and to pay the laſt ſad unavailing Office to it's *Manes* ——

——*Manibus date lilia plenis*"
" *His ſaltem accumulem Donis & fungar inani*
" *Munere*"——

Let not your paternal Tenderneſs carry you any farther. Have no Recourſe to magic Arts to call up it's fleeting Shade; or, if You do, do not expect that I ſhould wage War with an unbodied Phantom.

" *Irruit, ac ferro fruſtra diverberat Umbras.*"

It would undoubtedly have been barbarous to rob you of your unfortunate Infant, if your Imagination had been barren. But you may well bear the Loſs. Your happy and inventive Fancy, which is married to ſo maſculine and regular a Judgment, will ſoon repair the Damage with a numerous Race of beautiful and laſting Productions,

——" *Pulchrâ faciat Te Prole Parentem.*"

To

To return; I never affirmed, that "*Perſon* and "*Subſtance* were unintelligible." All this whole Paragraph turns upon that Miſtake; and upon confounding *Unintelligible* with *Incomprehenſible.*

In the next Paragraph you will not admit the Notion of an *infinitely-extended Deity*, for Fear it ſhould draw along with it ſome Conſequences, which would be injurious to your late dear departed Hypotheſis. Well; will you admit the Words of the *Pſalmiſt? Whither ſhall I go then from thy Spirit, or whither ſhall I go then from thy Preſence? If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there: If I go down to Hell, thou art there alſo. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea; even there alſo ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right-Hand ſhall hold me.* Is not acting in *Heaven diſtant* and *diſtinct* from acting in *Hell*, or in the *Sea?* And does not *diſtinct, diſtant Action* prove *diſtant, diſtinct Subſtance*; or a local Diſtinction of Subſtance? "Can a Thing," ſay you, "be diſtinct from itſelf?" No; if by *Self* you mean *Perſonality*, and the *Whole* of that *Perſonality*. For then the Queſtion would be; Can the *whole*, as *whole*, be *diſtinct* from the *whole?* But Subſtance *eſſentially* united to Subſtance, and therefore *one*, may admit of *Diſtinction.* Anſwer me this Queſtion: Is the Subſtance, which is in Heaven, one individual Subſtance with that which filleth all Things? and it will be an eaſy Matter to anſwer your's. God exiſts *wholly* in Heaven; or elſe there is only *Part* of God there. Well then; according to the Scheme of *Non-Extenſion*, to which you are a late Convert, can the ſame numerical Being be *confined*, and yet *unconfined?* "Can there be

"a Diffuſion

" a Diffuſion of it," to uſe Dr. WATERLAND's Words, " every-where, and yet nothing be diffuſed?" For it is ſuppoſed that the whole Eſſence is *diffuſed* all over the Univerſe, and yet remains whole and *undiffuſed* in Heaven. According to the Scheme of *Non-Extenſion* we have ſo many diſtinct, numerical *Wholes*, which make one numerical, *diſtinct Whole*, becauſe eſſentially united. According to the Scheme of *Extenſion*, we have ſo many *diſtinct numerical Parts*, which have the *whole Attributes* reſiding in them, and yet make one numerical Subſtance, for the ſame Reaſon. Both agree, that the Divine Nature is *diſtinct*, though *undivided*.

Suppoſing my Soul had exactly the ſame Perfections as your's, (by the Way, I wiſh mine had) and were, by the Power of God, unalienably united; ſo that you became, in a *literal* Senſe, *Dimidium Animæ meæ*, which you are now in a *figurative* one; it is plain they would be *one*, as far as we underſtand any Thing of *Unity*. For when we perceive any Object in a *continued Poſition*, *fenced* out from other Things, we never ſcruple to give it the Name of *One*; and being incapable of Separation, and being of the ſame Kind and Degree, they might not only be *called*, but would really *be* ſtrictly *One*. But it is not ſo plain, that this *Unity* between us would be a Bar to all *Diſtinction*: You might exert yourſelf in a *diſtinct* Manner; You might be adorning *Morality*, while I was employed in dry *Metaphyſicks*.

" If three intelligent Acting *Subſtances* can be made " out to be one intelligent Acting *Subſtance*, then, *&c.*" Anſwer: This ſuppoſes Unity of Perſon and Unity of Subſtance to be equivalent. Whereas Plurality of Perſons

Perſons implies the Subſtance, though *united*, to be *diſtinguiſhed* after ſuch a Manner. Purality of Subſtances implies the Subſtance to be *divided*. So many ſeparable Perſons are ſo many Subſtances; but Perſons having no poſſible Detachment the one from the other, are one Subſtance. The Perſons then are each *Subſtance*, but not *A Subſtance*; becauſe we never give the Name of *A Subſtance* but where the Subſtance is *aliene*, and independent of another. Perſon then, each Divine Perſon, as I ſaid before, is *Being*, becauſe it exiſts; but not *A Being*, becauſe the Perſons do not exiſt ſeparate.

In Anſwer to this, you oblige me with another Specimen of my Reaſoning: "God and my Soul "are," according to my Way of Arguing, "each "*Being*; but not *Beings*, becauſe they do not exiſt "ſeparately." And is this a Specimen of my Reaſoning? Surely you could not think me ſo ſenſeleſs. My Soul is *actually* divided from God as He exiſts in Heaven; and as to that *particular* (I was going to ſay *numerical)* Subſtance, in which I *live, and move, and have my Being*, I am capable of being removed from That, conſidered as *particular*, to any Other (call it Portion or Whole) of the Deity. Wherever I go the Deity is ſtill. But then it is the Deity as *locally diſtinct*; and by Annihilation I am entirely caſt out of his Preſence.

But this is not all. Another Ingredient of Unity is, that the Subſtance be of *the ſame Kind*, or *homogeneous*. Now though God is a Spirit, and my Soul a Spirit; yet Spirit does not ſignify one *determinate* Kind of Being; but is one of your *negative Ideas*. And though we call every Thing *Spirit* that is *not Matter*;

Matter; yet it is as improper a Diviſion to range Beings into Spirit and not-Spirit, as it would be into *Horſe* and not-*Horſe*. As my Soul is of a quite different Eſſence from the Table on which I write, though they are both Subſtance; ſo God tranſcends my Soul infinitely more (though they are both Spirit) than my Soul can this Table. *Homogeneity* therefore, or a Negation of Mixture, being to be taken into the Account of *Unity*, as well as *Indiviſibility*; it is plain my Soul, however cloſely *united* cannot be ſtrictly one with God.

To conclude, Whatever Being *homogeneous*, is eſſentially united, is one, whether the Scheme of Extenſion, or Non-Extenſion takes Place; nay, if you ſhould reject them both, it will ſtand collected in itſelf upon the ſure Bottom of common Senſe. The Trinity is *Subſtance* and *Subſtance* eſſentially united ——Therefore the Trinity is *One*.

You will find this Letter very confuſed: But having had ſo many Proofs of your Candour, I am under no Apprehenſion upon that Account.

I ſhould be dead to all Sentiments of Friendſhip, if unaffected with your laſt very affectionate Paragraph. I cannot equal it; and therefore will not attempt it.

That you may long continue happy in the Poſſeſſion of an eaſy Fortune, a clear Head, and a generous Heart, is the ſincere Wiſh of,

SIR,

Your moſt affectionate Friend

And humble Servant,

JER. SEED.

The

The Fourth LETTER.

To the Rev. T. H. *relating to a Paſſage in one of the* Author's *Sermons.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM obliged to any Perſon, who will point out to me what he apprehends to be a Fault in any of my Writings. As to the Paſſage which you mention, *Vol.* II. *p.* 95. my only Fault is, which is a great One, that I have not expreſſed myſelf as I ſhould have done. My Meaning was, that " the " Number of the Damned will bear no more Pro- " portion to that of the Bleſſed *throughout the whole* " *Univerſe, than,* &c." not confining myſelf to the Inhabitants of the Earth: Accordingly, in this very Sermon, *Page* 125, *Line* 19th, I expreſly call the *Damned* a *few incurable Members of the whole ſtupendous Body of the Univerſe*; not meaning that they were *abſolutely* few, but *comparatively* with the whole Body of intelligent Beings. If the worthy Gentleman, whoſe Name you do not mention, had thought my Words capable of this Conſtruction, I dare venture to ſay, he would not have made any Objection againſt them.

But ſuppoſing my Words will not bear this Senſe; give me Leave to obſerve, that they are not a poſitive *Aſſertion*, as you ſeem to think; they are only a

charitable *Preſumption.* If I had had ſufficient Authority from Scripture, I would not have ſaid, *it may be preſumed*; but, *it is certain.* The Reaſons for ſuch a *Preſumption* (for they are not ſtrong enough to found any *Doctrine* upon) are as follow. *Firſt*, If I am not miſtaken, one Half of Mankind are cut off before they come to the full Uſe of their Reaſon, or have *their Senſes* ſufficiently *exerciſed to diſcern between* moral *Good and Evil.* Theſe, if baptized, are undoubtedly in a State of Salvation; if unbaptized, they may be ſaved by the uncovenanted Mercies of God; at leaſt, they will not be made miſerable in a future State. *Secondly*, If you add to theſe all thoſe who live and die in a State of invincible Ignorance, or a State that makes very near Approaches to it, (ſurprizing Inſtances of which you may meet with even in our own Country) the Number riſes greatly above one Half of Mankind. *Thirdly*, Among *Adults*, (who have, or may have clear Ideas of their Duty) for one that lives and dies a hardened Criminal, there are Numbers who do not allow themſelves in the habitual Practice of any deliberate, known Sin. Inſtances of Baſeneſs, Villainy, and malicious Wickedneſs are ſtill *ſurprizing*; which they would not be, unleſs they were rare and uncommon. But enough of this, that I may not enter on a beaten Topick.

It has been proved at large, that there is far more moral Good, than Evil even in this Earth; and conſequently, one would think, far more *good* Men, in a qualified Senſe of the Word, than *bad*: conſequently, there will be more happy than miſerable even among *Adults*, who have, or may have juſt

Apprehenſions

Apprehenſions of their Duty. And for thoſe who have not, and perhaps cannot have, God will *accept them according to what they have, and not according to what they have not.* Theſe Laſt, however, I take to make up the Bulk of Mankind in all Ages. For the Prevalency of moral Good, ſee Archbiſhop KING on the *Origin of Evil*, eſpecially *Note (AA).*

Laying all theſe Things together, *viz.* the Caſe of Infancy and Childhood, the Caſe of invincible Ignorance, the much greater Number of good Actions than bad, I think there are ſufficient Grounds for a charitable Preſumption, and I meant nothing more. A great many other Things might be taken into the Account, as the Strength of ſome Men's Paſſions, which I have hinted at in the ſame Paragraph. As for the Scripture Texts which ſeem to ſay, that the Number of the *ſaved* will be *few*, I beg Leave to refer the Gentleman to *Sermon XIIth, Vol. IV.* of Dr. CLARKE's *Poſthumous Sermons*; to which I may add the pious and judicious Archbiſhop SHARP, in his *VIth Serm.* of *Vol. III.*

But if the Gentleman ſhould think the Paſſage indefenſible, as perhaps it is, I ſhall either ſtrike it out, if ever the Book has a ſecond Edition, or qualify it as above *: and any other obnoxious Paſſage, which he or you will be ſo kind as to ſhew me, ſhall have the ſame Fate. Pray my humble Service to him.

I write this with a violent Fit of the Head-ach upon me, which hinders me from expreſſing myſelf ſo well as I could wiſh.

* *N. B.* The Author has qualified the Paſſage referred to, by adding the Words, *throughout the whole Creation.* Vid. SEED's Sermons, *Vol.* II. *p.* 97. *Second Edition.*

I am aſhamed, that I have not anſwered a former Letter of your's before this. The Truth of the Matter is, it is unanſwerable: Though I always read your Letters with Pleaſure, yet it is a Mortification to me to anſwer them: becauſe I cannot write with that Life and Spirit with which you do. I thank you for the many ingenious Things you ſay in your laſt. I ſhall keep it by me as an Inſtance how far you could be miſtaken, in your younger Years, in your favourable Judgment on me and my Sermons. I hope this Letter will find you well. It is ſome Pleaſure to me, that you do not complain of your bad State of Health, as you did in the Letter before. What Succeſs do your Propoſals meet with? I am afraid you find, what I always obſerved, that the World does not encourage modeſt Worth. Pray let me hear from you, and believe me to be,

DEAR SIR,

Your affectionate Friend,

Enham, July 12th, 1743.

J. SEED.

The

The Fifth LETTER.

Wrote under a feigned Name, to a FRIEND *in a dangerous Fit of Sickneſs.*

SIR,

A Sincere Deſire to do you Good, which is my only Motive to write, muſt be likewiſe my only Apology for troubling you with this Letter.

If I am not miſinformed, your Caſe is not without ome Danger: You may, for ought you know, ſtand uſt upon the Brink of Eternity; an Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery. And will you, Sir, audaciouſly ruſh into the ſacred Preſence of the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, as *the Horſe ruſheth into the Battle*, without any Fore-thought or Conſideration what may become of you hereafter? No, Sir, *I hope better Things* from *you*, who cannot be unapprifed of the great Value of an immortal Soul. Can Man, fooliſh Man, that cannot often gain the leaſt Preferment here without conſiderable Application, think, that *an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory* will be proſtituted to his lazy Wiſhes and ſpiritleſs Endeavours, or perhaps to his No-Endeavours at all?

GOD, Sir, has bleſſed you with very good Senſe; be pleaſed then to exert it, in conſidering—Whether you have fully anſwered the End, for which an infi-

nitely-wiſe Being ſent you into the World——Whether you have endeavoured to keep up a Senſe of the Regard due to the Deity, by an exemplary Piety; and to promote the Good of your Fellow-Creatures by an active Benevolence. Do not you think theſe Ends worthy of a reaſonable Being? And do not you think that God created you to anſwer theſe Ends? Your Illneſs, Sir, is perhaps a lingring Illneſs, and you may yet perhaps, in ſome Meaſure, anſwer the End of your Creation, by joining, as far as your Health will permit, with your Family in Morning and Evening Prayers; by expreſſing an undiſſembled Love and Gratitude to that Being, who died to procure Pardon and eternal Happineſs for you, for me, nay, even for the greateſt of Sinners, upon their ſincere Repentance; by forgiving every one, that has wronged you, and by making ample Reſtitution, if you have wronged any; by bearing your Sickneſs with Patience, and an humble Reſignation to God. Your *Sun*, though probably near it's *Setting*, may yet *ſhine* out, and thoſe, who are near you, may ſee, and be influenced by your good Works, *to go, and do likewiſe.*

Pardon me, Sir, if I take the Liberty to tell you, that I am ſorry to hear you have generally neglected to receive the *Sacrament*. If this is true, you have lived in a State of wilful Diſobedience to one of God's expreſs Commands. And wilful Diſobedience to that Being, from whom every Thing that you have is received, and to whom every Thing that you can do is but your bounden Tribute, is no ſlight, no inconſiderable Crime. You, who, perhaps, may think it not immoral to diſobey the great Majeſty of Heaven

ven in poſitive Inſtances; yet would judge it highly criminal for a Son to diſobey his Parent, or a Servant his Maſter in indifferent Matters. To eat Bread, and drink Wine, is indeed *in itſelf* of no Signification. But to eat Bread and drink Wine out of a Principle of ſincere Obedience to Him who made You, and of Love and Gratitude to Him who redeemed you, with an affectionate Deſire that you may be a Partaker of the Benefits of his Paſſion——this is Virtue, ſubſtantial Virtue. Whatever crude and undigeſted Notions ſome may form of God's Mercy, it is as certain, as it is that there is a Deity; that he will make ſome Diſtinction between thoſe who have obeyed him; and thoſe who have wilfully diſobeyed. And what that Diſtinction will be, I leave you to conſider. Thoſe cannot be entitled to the Divine Favour, that are regardleſs of the Divine Will and Pleaſure.

But, before you receive the *Sacrament*, it will be neceſſary for you to take a Review of your paſt Life. Your Sickneſs having confined you to your Room, you muſt have a great many vacant Hours upon your Hands; and a Chriſtian ought to be then moſt buſy, when, in the Language of the World, he has nothing to do: but, in the Language of Reaſon and Chriſtianity, has his *eternal Salvation to work out with Fear and Trembling*. Judge yourſelf, and *then you will not be judged of the Lord*. But if you neglect to do this, then think what a ſhocking Thing it muſt be to give an Account before the greateſt Being in the World, of a Life, that you perhaps cannot reflect on ſeriouſly in private, and by yourſelf, without Shame and Confuſion. Look up

to that Being whom you have offended, with all the Humility of a contrite Spirit, and look upon this World as (what it may ſoon perhaps in Reality be) *Nothing to you.* Soon, very ſoon (oh, may it not prove too ſoon for you! I mean before a thorough Repentance) *may* that Being, whom *none can ſee, and live,* ſit in Judgment, on your Soul: And then you muſt either be, what I ſincerely wiſh, eternally happy; or, what I tremble to think of, eternally miſerable. If the latter, which God forbid! ſhould be your Caſe: How dreadful muſt it be to lift up thoſe Eyes, which you had wilfully ſhut before, juſt as you are ſinking, irrecoverably ſinking, in endleſs Miſery? *Behold now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvatiun!* On your preſent Behaviour, on this great Criſis, *your* ALL depends! God, who will *not deſpiſe a troubled and a contrite Heart,* will have Compaſſion on you, provided you have firſt Compaſſion on yourſelf. But if you do not return to him with an whole Heart; nothing is more fit, than that they, who are incorrigibly Bad, ſhould be irretrievably Wretched.

I ſay no more. May God grant that *you may know the Things belonging to your Peace, before they be* for ever *hid from your Eyes!*

Thus I have wrote, what I am ſure is a very *affectionate,* and what I wiſh may prove a very *affecting* Letter. It is not material to inform you, from what *Hand* this Epiſtle comes: It is enough to aſſure you, that it proceeds from an *Heart* ſincerely your's,

May 9.

E. E.

An

An ESSAY on refined and friendly Converſation.

Written in the Twenty-ſecond Year of the AUTHOR's *Age.*

IT has been obſerved that ſome, who have been juſtly eſteemed *Writers* of the firſt Rank in the Learned World, have not been favoured with a very happy Turn for Converſation; and that others, on the Contrary, could never make their Appearance to Advantage in Print, who were yet looked upon as the very Life and Genius of every private Company they came into.

Thus Mr. ANTHONY WOOD informs us, " That, " whenever Sir WILLIAM KILLIGREW took Pen in " Hand, he did not come up to the never-failing " Smartneſs, which he ſhewed in Converſaion; " whereas Mr. COWLEY was the Reverſe of this " Character, as Sir JOHN DENHAM gives us to un- " derſtand in the following Lines:

" *Had* COWLEY *ne'er* ſpoke, KILLIGREW *ne'er* writ:
" *Combin'd in one, they'd ſhew'd a matchleſs Wit.*"

This may be accounted for after the following Manner: Some Men are of an airy, volatile Temper; the Edge of their Wit is very *fine*, but ſoon turn'd: They have Briſkneſs and Vivacity of Spirit enough

enough for a ſharp, ſurprizing Repartee, or any other extempore Sally of Fancy; but they have not that Strength and Steadineſs of Spirit, which is neceſſary to keep up an uninterrupted Tenour of good Writing, and to convey their Thoughts with Chaſtity and Propriety of Style. And indeed even in Converſation I have obſerved ſome Gentlemen of this Stamp, when they have fallen foul on Men of ſuperior Senſe, to have been very briſk and vigorous in their firſt Attack; but fainter and weaker in their laſt Efforts. Their Spirits evaporated, and, if their Antagoniſt bravely ſtood his Ground, he was convinced, that their Forces were rather for a ſhort Skirmiſh of Wit, than for a ſet and laſting Battle. They put me in Mind of what ſome ancient Hiſtorians relate of the *Gauls*, *viz.* That in the Beginning of the Fight, they uſed to perform more than *Men*; but towards the Concluſion of it leſs than *Women*. Some, on the other Hand, are of a more phlegmatick Conſtitution; their Parts are ſlow, but ſure; and, what is wanting in Sprightlineſs, is made up in what we call ſtrong, maſculine Senſe.

I would therefore obſerve, that there are two Kinds of Wit; the one I call *Tinſel Wit*, which conſiſts of glittering Points, little Flouriſhes, and ludicrous Conceits: the other may be ſtyled true Sterling-Wit; which is made up of a rich Vein of good Thinking, exalted Sentiments, and curious Obſervations. The former is more glaring and dazzling; the Touches of the latter are very maſterly, but too delicate and nice for vulgar Obſervers. The former pleaſes more upon a ſuperficial, tranſient View; the latter upon a mature Deliberation; the one therefore more

more taking in common Converſation; the other in Writing.

That I may not loſe myſelf in too large a Field, I ſhall reduce my Thoughts to the three following Heads, *viz.*

I*ſt*, The Advantages of refined and friendly Converſation.

II*dly*, The Subject Matter of it; and,

III*dly*, The Manner of handling the Topicks of ſuch Converſation.

I*ſt*, On the Advantages of refined and friendly Converſation.

One of the greateſt Pleaſures a Man can propoſe to himſelf in this World is to live with a ſmall, ſelect Company of learned and virtuous Friends, in an uninterrupted Intercourſe of mutual Civilities and Endearments. A refined and maſterly Converſation with Men of this Turn, brightens the Imagination, and ripens the Judgment, and convinceth us, how much the *Friend* improves the *Scholar*. As by reading we take in a vaſt many Ideas; ſo, by Converſation, we learn to marſhal them in their proper Order. The Style of ſeveral Learned Men has been embarraſſed and perplexed; for no other Reaſon, I believe, but becauſe they had too much led the Lives of Recluſes. Their Heads, inſtead of a regular Train of Thinking, have been crammed with a confuſed Groupe of Ideas.

The Earl of CLARENDON, in his *Survey of the Leviathan*, informs us, that Mr. HOBBES ſpent too much Time in *Thinking*, and too little in *Exerciſing* thoſe

thoſe Thoughts in the Company of other Men of the ſame, or as good Faculties: for Want whereof he contracted ſuch a Moroſity, that he was at the ſame Time poſſeſſed *with* a Spirit of Contradiction, and yet impatient *of* Contradiction from others. Converſation therefore is very neceſſary to beat down that over-bearing Temper, and Self-ſufficiency of Mind, which is ſo very diſagreeable to the World. Men of the moſt enlarged Views cannot take in the whole Compaſs and Extent of Truth: almoſt every one, by a peculiar Caſt of Mind, ſees Things in a different Light. Wherefore Perſons of lower Attainments very often make ſome Diſcoveries, which have eſcaped the Obſervation of Men of much greater Depth and Penetration: as poorer Countries can boaſt of ſome diſtinguiſhing Products, which the richer are deſtitute of. Whether Providence did not wiſely ordain this, that the latter might not entertain an overweening Conceit of their own Abilities, and the former have too great a Diffidence of their own Parts, I ſhall not preſume to determine. However, the Thing itſelf is too obvious to admit of any Diſpute; and from hence we may gather the Neceſſity of interchanging our Thoughts in Diſcourſe, if we would improve them to the utmoſt.

There are ſome Men, who have excellent good Senſe, and yet are very diſtruſtful of it. A little Modeſty indeed is a thin tranſparent Veil, that ſhews thoſe Graces, which it would ſeem to cover. One of this Make is like a new-blown Roſe, which is more ſweet and beautiful, when it's Leaves are a little folded; than when it's Glories are fully diſplayed. But, on the Contrary, an *exceſſive* Modeſty

deſty lays a Perſon under ſuch Apprehenſions of *offending*, that it makes him leſs capable of *pleaſing*. To remedy this Inconvenience, a Club of ſincere learned Friends may be of admirable Uſe. Here he may give the full Play to his Genius, and deſcant upon any Topick with Freedom, where he is ſure nothing will be diſcovered to his Diſadvantage; and, in ſhort, bring every Thought to the Teſt and Examination of thoſe Gentlemen; who have that ingenuous Frame of Mind, that generous Sincerity of Heart, as to be very ready and *willing*, that diſtinguiſhing Judgment, and Clearneſs of Head, as to very *able*, to point out his Beauties and Faults; to rectify his Miſtakes, and applaud his Excellencies.

The laſt and greateſt Advantage I ſhall mention, is that of *mutual Advice*: "It may be reaſonably "believed," (ſays the *Noble Hiſtorian*) of the Duke of BUCKINGHAM, "that if he had been bleſt with "one faithful Friend, who had been qualified with "Wiſdom and Integrity, that great Perſon would "have committed as few Faults, and done as tranſ-"cendent worthy Actions, as any Man who ſhined "in ſuch a Sphere in that Age in all *Europe*." But for Want of this Happineſs, "he was carried away "by the Current, or rather Torrent of his impe-"tuous Paſſions." A remarkable and pregnant Inſtance of the Advantages of Friendſhip! When an intimate Friend ſeems to be actuated with a Spirit of Sincerity; and gives us to underſtand, he has our Intereſt much at Heart: This opens all the Avenues to our Mind, ſtrengthens and enforces his Admonitions, ſo that they never fail to make a much deeper Impreſſion, than the moſt maſterly

Strokes

Strokes of a Book of Morality. We conſider the Author as influenced by a Motive of doing Good in general; whereas the Friend is actuated by a Concern for us in particular; and this Conſideration makes us lay his Advice more to Heart. A Society of Friends will not think it ſufficient to reprove a Man for flagrant, enormous Faults; but will make it their Buſineſs to animadvert upon any little Indecency or Flaw in his Conduct. Dr. HAMMOND uſed to ſay it was a poor Deſign in Friendſhip to keep the Man we admitted to our Boſom only from being *ſcandalous*; as if the Phyſician ſhould only ſecure his Patient from the Plague.

II*dly*, Upon the Subject-Matter of Converſation. If I were to propoſe any Model for Converſation; I ſhould chuſe that of XENOPHON's *Sympoſium*, where the Diſcourſe was *diverting* without any Levity or Impertinence, and *inſtructive* without any Stiffneſs or Auſterity. We are told in the *Bibliotheque Choiſie*, that Mr. LOCKE, Mr. LE CLERC, and Mr. LIMBORCH uſed to meet conſtantly once a Week, and diſcuſs ſome very important Queſtion, which they had pitched upon before. This Method theſe famous Authors took to enlarge the Sphere of their Knowledge by communicating their Thoughts. If Diſcourſe were altogether confined to ſtated Subjects, it might perhaps be too formal; if intirely occaſional, it might evaporate in light Trifles. The beſt Way therefore would be to obſerve a Medium, and to ſet apart about two Hours for ſome ſtated Subject, and to give up the reſt to any incidental Converſation.

I have

I have known ſome Companies, in which, if a Man talked virtuouſly he incurred the Imputation of Hypocriſy; if learnedly, that of Pedantry. Surely no Man of Merit will ever proſtitute his good Senſe to low Ribaldry and Obſcenity, when Learning opens to him the nobleſt Fields of Speculation. Wit muſt run very *low*, if nothing but the *Dregs* and *Sediments* of Impurity appear; and it is a Maxim with me, that no one, that had wherewithal to entertain a ſound and unbiaſſed Reaſon, would ever addreſs himſelf with lewd Talk to the corrupt Paſſions and Inclinations of Mankind.

To return from this Digreſſion; I would by all Means, next to *Virtue* and *Religion* in general, recommend *Polemical Divinity*. It would be too ſhocking to attack Chriſtianity directly and immediately: Therefore thoſe, who are no Friends to it, ſap it's Foundations by Degrees, and begin with its fundamental Articles. One Error is to pave the Way for another that they may bring their Deſigns to bear: And the Maſk is to be worn till all Things are ripe for Execution. They look upon all the reſt of the World as Men of narrow Views, and therefore deal with them as with ſtrait-mouthed Veſſels: If they ſhould go raſhly to work, and attempt to throw in too much at once, their Labour would be loſt, and their Doctrine fall to the Ground; they, for this Reaſon, ſtrive to carry their Point by *pouring* in their Tenets *gently* and by Degrees. To prevent this ſtale Artifice of the *Deiſts*, and to check the gradual Advances of Error; it is a Duty incumbent upon all Men of good Abilities to lay in a competent Stock of *Divinity*. And, in Order to this, it is neceſſary

to

to impart their Thoughts for their mutual Advantage; which will make them talk as pertinently upon theſe Topicks as if the Bent of their Studies had been almoſt entirely applied this Way. A Spirit of Emulation will quicken their Endeavours; and it will be pleaſant as well as uſeful, to point out to one another the Sophiſtry to which Hereticks have Recourſe, to ſupport a ſinking Cauſe.

When a Man knows he muſt ſhortly deliver his Thoughts in Converſation upon any important Article or material Queſtion; he reads with more Attention; endeavours to draw off the Flower and Spirit of many Authors upon the ſame Subject; thoroughly digeſts his Notions, and treaſures them up in his Memory. Beſides, his Studies center in one Point; whereas, at other Times, he may be apt to ſhoot at Rovers, without aiming at any certain Mark.

If any ſhould object, that what I have recommended would too much pall and flatten the Spirit of Converſation; I beg Leave to obſerve, that ludicrous Wit and facetious Diſcourſes may beget in us a ſhort, unſatisfactory Gleam of Joy; whereas ſolid Senſe and virtuous Reflections impreſs upon the Mind a calm, laſting Serenity of Temper: The former, if too much indulged, ſink, weaken, and debaſe the Majeſty of a rational Soul; whereas the latter raiſe, elevate, and ennoble it's Diſpoſition: When a Man has been laying out that Time in improving Diſcourſe which is generally loſt in Trifles; the Mind is conſcious of having acted ſuitably to the Dignity of it's Nature, and for this Reaſon feels that refined Delicacy of Pleaſure, and that agreeable Complacency,

cency, which is infinitely preferable to any ſhort-lived Blaze of Mirth and Laughter.

I would not be thought an Enemy to the Graces and Embelliſhments of *Wit*, though I think *Religion* and *Learning* ought to take Place of them. The Imagination does indeed ſometimes get the Aſcendant of Reaſon; and a ſurprizing Brightneſs of Thought has been obſerved in ſome, where a ſteady Judgment and nervous Senſe have been wanting: As Diamond-Mines are ſaid to be often found in looſe, ſandy Ground. But *Wit*, under due Regulations, and in it's proper Sphere, may be of no ſmall Service; and I have known ſome Men, who would have embittered the Converſation by a Singularity of Carriage, and a moroſe Reſervedneſs of Temper, dextrouſly *rallied* into good Humour and Complaiſance, and forced to *ſacrifice to the Graces*. The Waters of *Marah* (if I may uſe a Scripture-Simile) were very *bitter*, and diſagreeable to the Taſte, till the Prophet, by throwing in ſome *Salt*, rendered them *ſweet* and palatable. If *Wit*, inſtead of keeping within it's proper Province, be miſemployed to keep Vice in Countenance, and decry Men of Merit; nothing can be of a more dangerous and deſtructive Tendency. If I ſhould expreſs myſelf with more Warmth againſt this Abuſe of it, I ſhould be very excuſeable, ſince to this was, in a great Meaſure, owing the Diſgrace of the greateſt Man *England* could boaſt of; in whom were happily reconciled the diſintereſted Spirit and Sincerity of the Patriot, and the deep Penetration and conſummate Abilities of the Stateſman: When that faithful Counſellor re-

preſented to King CHARLES II. the Blackneſs of his darling Vices, which the Wits of the Age had palliated under the ſoften Name of *Gallantries*; the Duke of BUCKINGHAM, and other Courtiers of the ſame Stamp, took Occaſion to ridicule, expoſe, and mimick him before his Majeſty; and, with an Air of Contempt, uſed to call him the *King's School-Maſter*. In the *Apology* for himſelf, which he left behind him when he fled beyond Sea, he complains heavily of ſome, who had reviled all Counſels and Counſellors; who had turned Things ſerious and ſacred into Ridicule, and taken all Means to render him ungrateful both to the King and People.

Is a Man poſſeſſed with a great many ſhining Qualities? If he have but one remarkable Foible, if, like *Achilles*, he be only vulnerable in one Part, theſe Gentlemen, like *Paris*, (ſo dextrous Archers are they) will be ſure to hit that Place, and too ſucceſsfully wound his Reputation. Let then all Topicks of *Defamation*, and let all *Abuſe of Wit* be exploded. I have always been mightily pleaſed with that amiable, and, I hope, juſt Character, which a celebrated Writer gives Mr. CONGREVE; namely, that, after a joyful Evening ſpent in his Company, no Man could ever reflect upon any Expreſſion of Mr. CONGREVE's that dwelt upon him with Pain and Uneaſineſs. A good-natured Wit will never think, that nothing but the Poignancy of *Raillery* and *Scandal* can give Life and Spirit to Converſation: whereas unhappy Tempers, that are eaten up with Spleen and Melancholy, take a ſullen Satisfaction in blaſting Reputations. And it muſt be owned, that they have very often an unlucky Turn this Way; malignant

Glances

Glances of Satyr, like Flaſhes of Lightning, coming generally from a dark, gloomy Sky.

III*dly*, Upon the Manner of handling the Subject-Matter of Converſation.

The great Secret of Converſation is, to aim rather at being *agreeable*, than to appear *ſhining* in Diſcourſe. If we ſhould trace the Faults and Defects of Converſation up to their original Source, I believe moſt of them might be reſolved into the Neglect of this Rule. Some are ſtill endeavouring to raiſe the Admiration of the Company, inſtead of gaining their Love. This kindles a Spirit of Contention and Strife for the Superiority; and the Affectation of the *Wit* and *Scholar* deſtroys the Complaiſance and Benevolence of the *Gentleman* and *Friend*. If a Man ſhould happen to be of ſuperior Abilities to the reſt of the Society; he ſhould, for that Reaſon, put himſelf upon a Foot of Equality with them; condeſcend to the Level of their Capacities, and ſhould not ſet his ſhining Qualities in a full, glaring Light, but rather modeſtly caſt them in Shades.

To the Neglect of the Rule which I have mentioned, it is owing, that ſome are ſo very oſtentatious of their Reading. This is a certain Sign, that their Learning ſits but looſely about them; and, if I may uſe ſo homely an Alluſion, I would ſay, they have not digeſted thoſe Notions very well, which they are ſo apt to throw up again upon every, or rather upon no Occaſion at all. To the ſame Principle it is owing, that ſome are continually putting their Inventions upon the Rack, to ſay ſomething ſuprizing and uncommon: Whereas, if Wit carries an Air of

much Study and Premeditation; if, inſtead of being a *Volunteer*, it be viſibly *preſſed* into the Service, nothing can be more nauſeating and diſtaſtful. It is with Wit, as with *Mercury*: That which is called *Virgin-Quickſilver*, which ſtreams out freely of itſelf in great Drops (which is readily diſcovered without the Help of Fire) is, upon ſeveral Accounts, far more valuable than that which is extorted and forced out by the Furnace. To the ſame Principle may be aſcribed that fiery Spirit of Oppoſition, which is ſo predominant in ſome Men, that, rather than confeſs one Abſurdity, they will be reduced to a Neceſſity of committing ten.

They are too far embarked in a bad Cauſe to make a Retreat with a good Grace; and therefore if they have added to their natural Parts the Superſtructures of Learning, they will entrench themſelves within a vaſt many artful Diſtinctions and ſubtile Evaſions.

They are very prolix in invalidating thoſe Arguments, which No-body lays any Streſs upon; but when they are really ſtrong and impregnable, they would fain ſlip them over as haſtily as they can, and take a ſlight, curſory Notice of them. Very material Objections are to them like marſhy Ground: A Man may make a Shift to run lightly and nimbly over it; but if he ever tread leiſurely, and dwell long upon one Place he infallibly ſinks.

If ever a *Vein of Ridicule* be neceſſary, I think it is here, where a Vein of juſt Arguing can have no Effect. When a Man is ſteeled and hardened againſt all Conviction, we may, like *Hannibal*, after other Expedients have been tried in vain, cut through the

Rock

Rock with *Vinegar*. Some *Jeſuits* once in Company with Monſieur BOILEAU, aſſerted, according to the Principles of that Society, that *Attrition* was only neceſſary; and that we were not obliged to *love God*. It was to no Purpoſe to unravel their Fallacies: They ſhewed themſelves inviolably attached to their Error; when Mr. BOILEAU, ſtarting up, cried: "Oh! "how prettily will it ſound in the Day of Judg- "ment, when our LORD ſhall ſay to his Elect; "*Come you, ye well-beloved of my Father*; for you "never loved me in your Life, but always forbad "that I ſhould be beloved, and conſtantly oppoſed "thoſe Hereticks, who were for obliging Chriſtians "to *love me*; and you, on the contrary, *Go to the* "*Devil, and his Angels, you the accurſed of my Fa-* "*ther; for you have loved me with your whole* "*Heart*, and have ſolicited and urged every Body "elſe to *love me*." This Raillery ſtruck the Oppo- nents dumb; and bore down that Oppoſition, which the moſt cogent Arguments before could not quell.

——— *Ridiculum acri*
Fortiùs & meliùs magnas plerúmque ſecat res.

If an handſome Opportunity preſents itſelf, it may not be amiſs to deal with an opinionative Fellow, as Biſhop BRAMHALL did with the *Popiſh Miſſionary*. When his Antagoniſt would obſtinately maintain whatever he had raſhly advanced, the Biſhop drove the Diſputant up into ſo narrow a Corner, that he was forced to affirm, that *Eating* was *Drinking*, and *Drinking* was *Eating*, in a *material* or *bodily* Senſe. This Aſſertion was ſo big with palpable Abſurdities,

that

that he needed no greater Trophy, if he could get under the *Jeſuit*'s Hand what he declared with his Tongue; which, being deſired, was by the other, in his Heat and Shame to ſeem to retreat, as readily granted. But upon cooler Thoughts (ſays my Author) finding perhaps, after the Conteſt was over, that he could not quench his Thirſt with a Piece of Bread; he reflected ſo ſadly on the Diſhonour he had ſuffered, that, not being able to digeſt it in ten Days Time, he died.

Why are ſo many ſo very ſolicitous to ſkreen themſelves under ambiguous Terms, and to give a plauſible Turn to the moſt dangerous Errors? Is it to impoſe upon the Bulk of Mankind, as Pirates do upon unwary Sailors, by hanging out falſe Colours? Does it not beſpeak a much greater Turn of Mind to retract an untenable Notion, than even to carry one's Point on the Side of Truth? The latter may be often owing merely to the Strength of a good Cauſe; whereas the former is the Reſult of that ingenuous Temper, and that Largeneſs of Soul, which animates a Man with the nobleſt Views, and makes him willing to ſacrifice the Vanity of being thought an able Diſputant to the diſintereſted Purſuit of Truth. His Opponent only conquers *him*; whilſt *he* triumphs over two very powerful Enemies, Error and himſelf: By the latter, I mean thoſe Prejudices and Paſſions, which hang a wrong Biaſs upon the Mind.

Good-Nature is undoubtedly the firſt Ingredient in good Converſation. The Man that is always pleaſed, and in good Humour, never fails of pleaſing the Company. *Learning* ſhould be grafted upon this Quality;

Quality; and the World has too great Reaſon to lament, that ill-natured Men, eſpecially if they be ingenious, ſhould ever have the Advantage of a *refined* Education. For though it be a common Obſervation, that Learning ſours a Man's Temper; yet I am apt to think it is a much truer Obſervation, that his Temper ſours his Learning. The Mind is the Caſk, and if that be ſour and impure, the moſt generous Wine will loſe it's own Taſte, and receive a Tincture from the Veſſel. When therefore the Bent of a Man's Inclinations is naturally perverſe, Learning falls in with it; and teaches *him*, whoſe Wit and Malice made him but too ſatyrical before, to give a keener Edge to his Raillery, and wound with more Succeſs. So that the Superſtructure of Education to a Man of this Complexion, is like adding Poiſon to that Arrow, which before was too apt to kill.

Humility is another endearing Quality. Nothing can be more odious than Self-ſufficiency in Men of ſuperior Attainments, or more ridiculous in Men of inferior Abilities. The World is generally Even with theſe Men; and, as they deſpiſe all, they are in Return deſpiſed by all Mankind. How contrary is that Character which is given of Dr. HAMMOND in his Epitaph:

Nihil eo excelſius erat aut humilius:
Scriptis ſuis Factiſque,
Sibi uni non placuit,
Qui, tam Calamo quam Vita,
Humano Generi complacuerat.

None

None bid fairer for being Great Men, than thoſe, in whom a modeſt Opinion of themſelves is interwoven with a laudable Ambition: the latter is an Incentive to thoſe Actions which may make them glorious; and the former is a Bar to all thoſe Attempts, which, being beyond their Strength, may make them ridiculous. The one prompts them to diſplay themſelves; and the other prevents them from expoſing themſelves. A Deſire of Glory, tempered with a Tincture of Humility, is (to uſe the Simile of an ingenious Writer upon a different Occaſion) like a Flame, that trembles as it aſpires. A Perſon of this excellent Frame of Mind knows how to condeſcend without ſtooping too low, and how to riſe without towering too high.

Good-Breeding is little elſe than Good-Nature poliſhed and beautified by Art. An ill-natured Man may, it is true, obſerve the little Punctilios and Forms of Civility; but he will be deficient in the very Eſſentials. To conſtitute a finiſh'd Character, the inflexible Integrity of the *Man of Honour* muſt be ſweetned and qualified by the winning Condeſcenſion of the *Courtier*, and regulated by the Piety and Erudition of the *Divine*. How gracefully does Learning ſit upon a Man, how venerably amiable does Religion appear to the Eye of the World, when attended with *Good-Breeding*? And how does *Good-Breeding* plead a more ſolid Title to our Value and Reſpect, when accompanied with Religion and Learning?

The *Gentleman* makes the *Chriſtian* and *Scholar* beloved; and the *Chriſtian* and *Scholar* make the *Gentleman* eſteemed. All theſe Accompliſhments muſt

muſt enter into the Compoſition of *refined* Converſation, which is then carried to it's greateſt Height of Perfection, when what is ſaid upon Matters of Moment, is at once endeared to us by a graceful Manner, and an agreeable Complacency of Behaviour; is enforced by the Weight and nervous Energy of ſound Reaſon, is enlivened by the exquiſite Beauties of fine Senſe and elegant Reflections.

An affable Deportment, and Meekneſs of Temper, will diſarm the moſt violent Antagoniſt of his Obſtinacy, and we need never fear by the Cogency of our Arguments to convince the *Underſtanding* of our Opponent; if we take Care, by the Candour of our Behaviour, to make an Impreſſion on his *Will.* Thoſe who advance the wildeſt Paradoxes, often daſh them with ſome material Truths, and juſt Thoughts: It would be therefore worth our while to try, whether by commending them for the latter, we might not dextrouſly reclaim them from the former: But if, inſtead of calmly entering into the Merits of the Cauſe, we ſhould break out into any indecent Sallies of Paſſion, it will be a very difficult Matter to bring others over to our Notions. For Men, like Load-ſtones, when they are once too much heated by the *Fire*, loſe that attractive Power which they had before. It is prettily ſaid by Biſhop TILLOTSON, "that thoſe who were tranſported by Paſ-"ſion, by their ill Management of a good Cauſe, "and by their ungracious Way of maintaining the "Truth, had found out a cunning Way to be in "the wrong, even when they are in the right."

None can be more prejudicial to the Intereſts of Truth, than thoſe who obtrude their Sentiments up-

on the Company with the magiſterial, ſupercilious Air of the *Pedant*, inſtead of offering them with the modeſt, courtly Addreſs of the *Gentleman*. Nothing conveys Inſtruction more artfully, than a ſeeming Diffidence; of which we have a pregnant Inſtance in my Lord CLARENDON: "Mr. *Hamb-*
"*den* (ſays he) was of that rare Affability and Tem-
"per in Debate, and of that ſeeming Humility and
"Submiſſion of Judgment, as if he brought no
"Opinion of his own with him, but a Deſire of In-
"formation and Inſtruction; yet he had ſo ſubtil a
"Way of interrogating, and, under the Notion of
"Doubts, inſinuating his Objections, that he infuſed
"his own Opinions into thoſe, from whom he pre-
"tended to learn and receive them." If theſe Meaſures were ſo powerful in a bad Cauſe, we may conclude they will be irreſiſtible in a good one.

F I N I S.